JIU JITSU STYLE

TOM DE BLASS

IBJJF EUROS REVIEW

BJJ & PROBLEM SOLVING

GIANNI GRIPPO MASTERCLASS

LEO VIEIRA

EDUARDO GONCALVES

THE CONCEPT OF 'LINEAGE'

VISITING RIO DE JANEIRO

ROMULO IS...

FORGING HIS LEGACY

ISSUE: 31 / 2016 €3.95

TRAIN
FOR
LIFE
THE NEW GAMENESS FEATHER
AVAILABLE FROM £94.99
Full range of new products at
WWW.GAMENESSEUROPE.COM

THE GAMENESS AIR
AVAILABLE FROM £54.99
Gameness

THE UK'S BIGGEST BJJ COMPETITION HAS JUST GOT BIGGER!

BRITISH OPEN 2016

BJJ

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu

14/15.05

独創的DA

Tatami fightwear

MAT HIRE UK
MARTIAL ARTS & SPORTING EVENTS

Storm KIMONOS

DATE: SAT 14TH & SUN 15TH MAY 2016

VENUE: COVENTRY SKYDOME ARENA, CROFT ROAD, COVENTRY CV1 3AZ

MORE INFO: WWW.BJJBRITISHOPEN.CO.UK FACEBOOK: brazilian jiu jitsu british open

THE UK'S BIGGEST BJJ COMPETITION HAS JUST GOT BIGGER!

BRITISH OPEN 2016

BJJ

Brazil Jiu Jitsu

14.05

KIDS

INTRODUCING NEW KIDS CATEGORIES FOR 2016...

独創的GA

Tatami fightwear

MAT HIRE UK
MARTIAL ARTS & SPORTING EVENTS

STORM KIMONOS

KIDS DATE: SATURDAY 14TH MAY 2016

VENUE: COVENTRY SKYDOME ARENA, CROFT ROAD, COVENTRY CV1 3AZ

MORE INFO: WWW.BJJBRITISHOPEN.CO.UK FACEBOOK: brazilian jiu jitsu british open

MANTO
PURA VIDA!
MANTOSHOP.EU

CONTENTS

12: CLASSIC MATCH - ROGER GRACIE VS JACARE

36: TOM DE BLASS

54: MASTERCLASS WITH GIANNI GRIPPO

64: SHEDDING THE GI WITH JUDE SAMUEL

92: IBJJF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS REVIEW

10 THE BIG PICTURE
A striking image from our archives

14 POSITION STUDY
50/50 Guard

16 BELT PROMOTIONS
Snaps from your gradings

20 IT'S SCIENCE
Leo Vieira

22 HISTORY 101
Kioto BJJ Team

24 EDUARDO 'EDU' GONCALVES
Nova Geracao black belt and UK BJJ stalwart

26 SAM GIBSON
Carlson Gracie UK Team's European medalist

41 OLI GEDDES
The concept of 'lineage'

44 BUDO JAKE
With his most memorable matches (part 1)

46 SAM JOSEPH
How BJJ makes us problem solvers

48 THE RIO EXPERIENCE
Discover the intoxicating Rio and training lifestyle

52 MATT JARDINE
The fitness behind fighting - the S & C debate

60 THE BJJ DOCTOR
Braulio Estima answers your questions

70 NICK BROOKS
Countering your opponent's defence

78 MIKE LENG
Top tips for your nutrition planning from our expert

80 FIT TO FIGHT
With Villain Strength founder, Andy Marshall

83 DR REBECCA HILL
To whip or not to whip?

85 HANNAH GORMAN
Balancing your gi and nogi training

98 MAT LIFE
The adventures of a bjj noob - Meerkatsu style

30 FORGING HIS LEGACY
Romulo Barral

JIU JITSU STYLE

SECOND FRONT PUBLISHING

Published by
Second Front Publishing Ltd
22 Beecham Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG30 2RD

ISSN 2049-4548 (Print)
ISSN 2049-4556 (Online)

Call: +44 (0)1189 594765
General email: info@bjjstyle.com
Editorial email: callum@bjjstyle.com
Advertising email: sales@bjjstyle.com
Subscription email: diane@bjjstyle.com

www.facebook.com/bjjstyle
www.twitter.com/jiujitsustyle

Annual digital subscription just £15. Jiu Jitsu Style's digital edition is available via the Android market and iTunes store. Visit our website for more details, search JIU JITSU STYLE on your smartphone or tablet, or visit pocketmags.com.

BJJSTYLE.COM

EDITOR: Callum Medcraft

CONSULTANT EDITOR: Roger Gracie

CONTRIBUTORS:
Gianni Grippo
Nick Brooks
Liam O'Neill
Roger Gracie
Can Sönmez
Seymour Yang
Callum Medcraft
Felix Rodriguez
Jake McKee
Oliver Geddes
Peter Carroll
Jude Samuel
Braulio Estima
Sam Joseph
Andre Borges
Hannah Gorman
Tyler Bishop
Rebecca Hill
Matt Jardine
Tom Bell
Mike Leng
Andy Marshall

ILLUSTRATION CONTRIBUTORS:
Seymour Yang & Gartista

PHOTOGRAHIC CONTRIBUTORS:
Callum Medcraft
Mark Ward
Storm Kimonos
Ric Ricard
Flavio Scorsato
Budo Dave
Joshua Halvatzis
Hywel Teague

COVER SHOT: Courtesy of Storm Kimonos

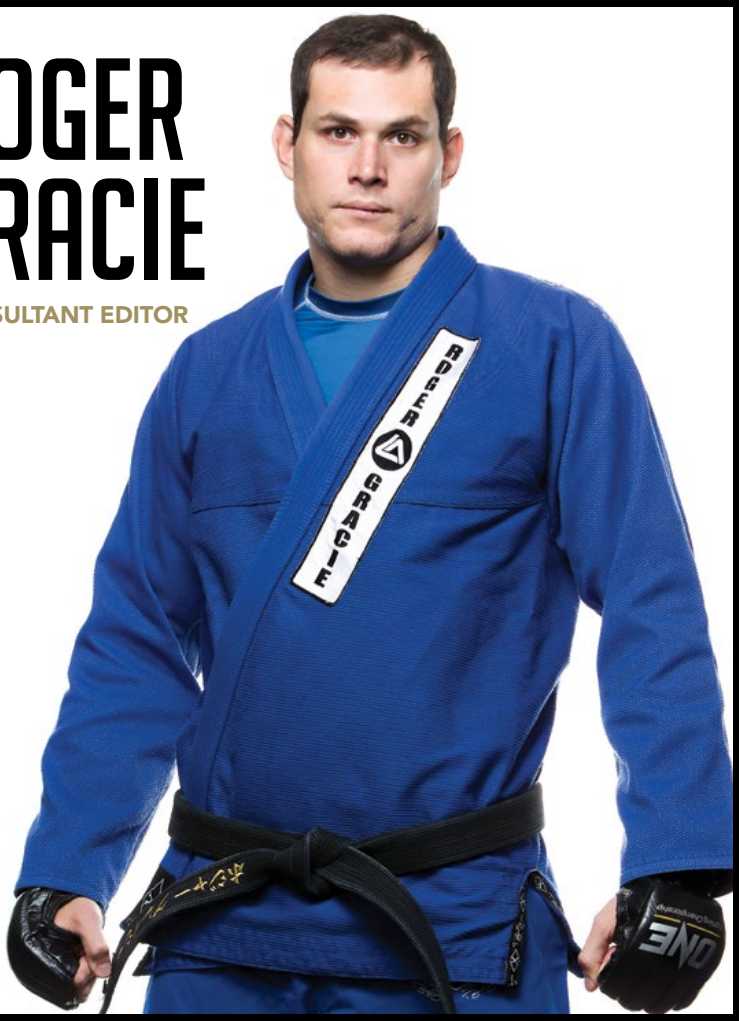
Distributed to the newstrade by:
COMAG Specialist – 01895 433800

PRINTED BY:
www.imageryuk.com

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed by the contributors to this magazine may not represent the views of the publishers Second Front Publishing Limited. Second Front Publishing Limited are not liable for any mistake, misprint or typographic errors. Copyright: 2016 Second Front Publishing Limited. All material in this magazine, including both text and images, is protected by copyright. Replication via republishing in any print or digital form requires consent from Second Front Publishing Limited.

ROGER GRACIE

CONSULTANT EDITOR



"IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SOME SUMMER TRAINING IN A GREAT ENVIRONMENT, CHECK OUT: WWW.ROGERGRACIEBJJCAMP.COM"

It is fantastic to have my friend Romulo Barral on the cover of our latest issue, as no-one deserves it more than him for all his achievements over the years. He's been leading the lines as one of the best competitors in the world for many, many years, and he still looks as dangerous as ever.

Romulo has had to deal with some bad injuries and always managed to come back stronger, bringing his jiu jitsu on to another level each time. I've fought Romulo before and he is definitely one of the toughest guys out there and his guard is of the highest level. Make sure you check out this interview to gain insight into the mind of a champion.

As always, the 2016 IBJJF competition season started off with the European Championships in Lisbon, Portugal. The competition once again set a record in terms of the number of people who registered to compete, and it was also held in a new venue. I must say that the jiu jitsu on display definitely suited the new surroundings, and it always amazes me how much talent there is now, even at the lower belt levels. A special well done goes to Romulo Barral and Felipe Pena, who were both on great form and had some very exciting matches.

We also have a great interview with Tom De Blass, who received his black belt from Ricardo Almeida and trained extensively with my cousin, Renzo. Tom is well known for being a great competitor in jiu jitsu and MMA, as well as for coaching the very exciting young fighter, Garry Tonon, so make sure you check this feature out.

We've got all the usual technique tutorials from Nick Brooks and Braulio Estima, as well as a Masterclass with Gianni Grippo. Make sure you study hard before your next class!

On a personal note, I am glad to announce that I will be holding my summer training camp once again this coming September 1st – 4th in Malaga, Spain. Last year was the second time I held a training camp in Spain, and it was a really great experience teaching, training and having fun in the beautiful surroundings of the Costa del Sol. This camp is open to everyone, so if you're interested in some summer training in a great environment, check out: www.rogergraciebjjcamp.com

Enjoy the latest issue of the magazine guys and – until next time – keep training and enjoying jiu jitsu.

ROGER GRACIE

STANDARD ISSUE
SCRAMBLE
スタンダードイシュオ
SEMI
CUSTOM
QUALITY ASSURED
SCRAMBLE STANDARD ISSUE
A CLEAN, FRESH JIU JITSU GI
ENGINEERED TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS
A BLANK CANVAS FOR YOUR ART
£64.99
スクランブル
SCRAMBLE
SCRAMBLESTUFF.COM

THE BIG PICTURE

Felipe Pena's amazing comeback against Erberth Santos was, undoubtedly, the most exciting match of the 2016 IBJJF European Championships. Despite being caught in a deep armbar early in the match, Pena refused to tap, and ended up sinking in a collar choke in the dying moments to secure victory.

PICTURES: CALLUM MEDCRAFT

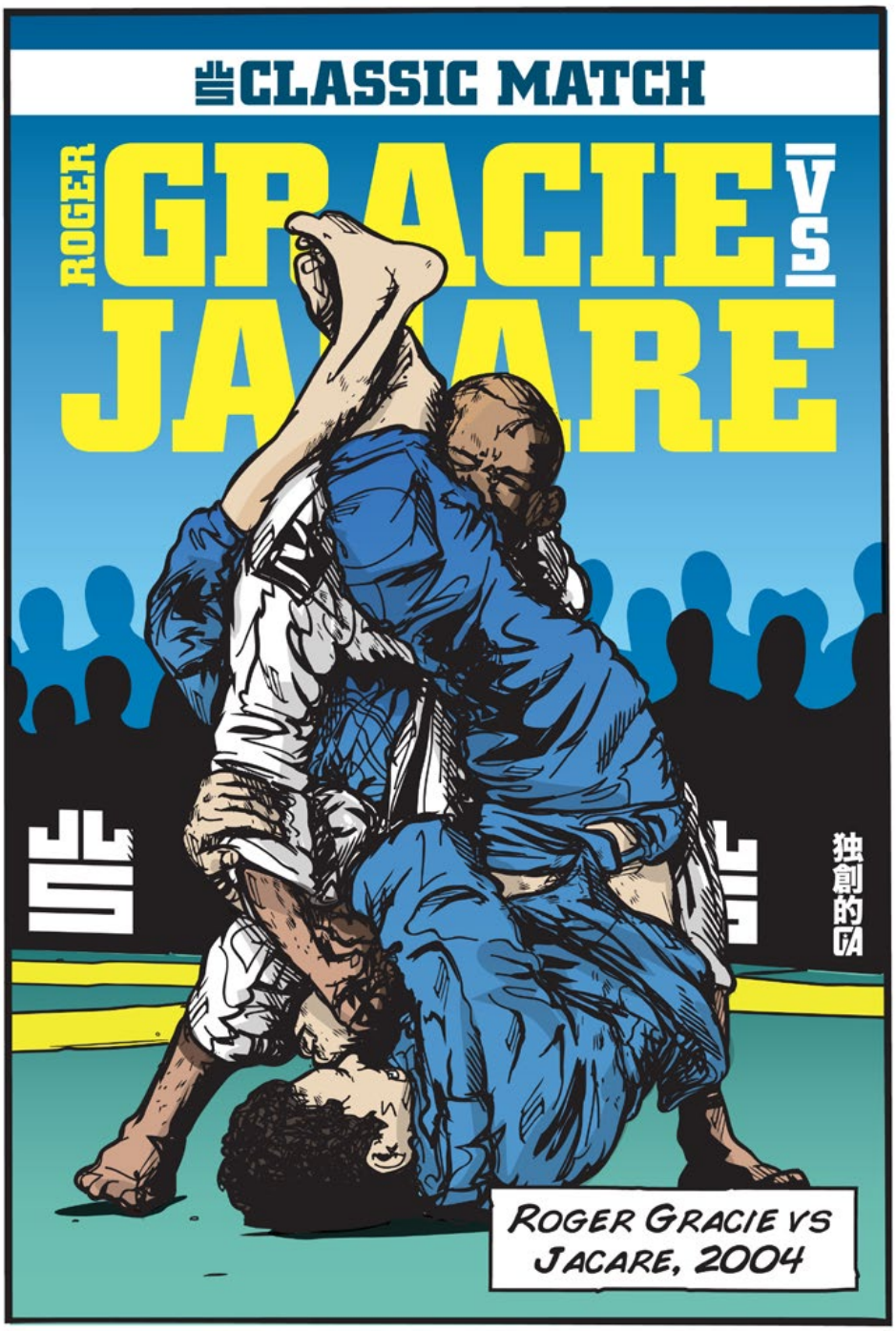
CLASSIC MATCH

THE MATCH WAS RESTARTED SEVEN TIMES DUE TO JACARE RUNNING OUT OF BOUNDS

ROGER GRACIE VS JACARE

In 2004, two future jiu jitsu giants were set to meet in the Absolute final. Roger Gracie, scion of the famous family, had already tasted gold that year in Super Heavy. It would prove to be the first gold medal in an incredible run of weight-division dominance that stretched until 2010. He would be facing Ronaldo Souza, known as 'Jacare' (not to be confused with Alliance co-founder Romero Cavalcanti). Jacare had also placed in his 88kg weight division, where he had been knocked into the silver medal position by Braulio Estima. Both Jacare and Roger carried a weight of expectation, each possessing an impressive record at the lower belts. Two years earlier, Roger had got the better of Jacare when they met in another Absolute final as brown belts. Their rematch at black belt would prove to be a historic clash.

"ROGER IS MORE SKILLED, BUT, BROTHER, I GOT INTO HIS CLOSED GUARD, GOT OUT, TOOK HIS BACK! WHAT A FIGHT. AND ABOUT THAT ARMLOCK, HE DIDN'T LET GO, I ESCAPED!"
- RONALDO JACARE



SOME PRAISED JACARE FOR HIS FORTITUDE IN TOUGHING OUT A DISLOCATED ELBOW. OTHERS WERE OUTRAGED THAT THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS TITLE IN BJJ HAD BEEN WON AFTER UNASHAMED STALLING

2 MINS 54 SECONDS WERE SPENT RESETTING AND RESTARTING THE MATCH AFTER 'THE ARMBAR'

WORDS: CAN SÖNMEZ ILLUSTRATIONS: GARTISTA

THE MATCH

After feeling each other out from the feet, Roger pulls guard, but they move out of bounds. Jacare is wary of Roger's closed guard, reluctant to go back inside when they restart in the centre. He repeatedly stands up, then drops right back down if Roger begins to threaten a sweep. Roger works for the armbar, attempting to manoeuvre Jacare's arm across: in the midst of switching to a triangle, Jacare is able to slip free. Roger defends in turtle, while Jacare explosively tries to drive his hooks in, eventually succeeding at around the four minute mark. Jacare is up four points.

Roger manages to spin through and lock his legs into 50/50 guard. He pushes hard for a sweep, resulting in a scramble with both fighters back on their feet. Roger again pulls guard. For the second time, they go out of bounds. Restarting in closed guard, Roger works his legs up high, still looking for that armbar. With a minute left to go in the match, Roger finally locks on the submission, slowly increasing the pressure. Jacare manages to stand up, but Roger continues to tighten his grip, turning belly down to finish. Somehow, Jacare jerks his arm free. Roger chases him as Jacare runs off the mat. The referee looks to restart the fight.

Jacare stands at the edge, his arm hanging limply by his side. It becomes clear that he's badly hurt, as that arm dangles uselessly for the rest of the match. Roger waits patiently in the centre of the mat, while Jacare remonstrates with the referee. He paces around the mat, refusing to engage. He gets several penalties and a chorus of loud booing from the audience. Jacare is not bothered: thanks to that back take, he remains ahead on points.

The referee signals for Roger to stand up, who looks to start the takedown battle. Once again, Jacare runs to the edge of the mat, earning himself another penalty with two points to Roger. Jacare now has to be careful, or he's at risk of being disqualified. He nevertheless continues his strategy of backpeddling to safety, hoping to run down the clock. At last Roger manages to get hold of his elusive opponent and pulls him down to the ground, but it's out of bounds. Jacare turns away, kicks his leg free and backs off, necessitating yet another restart. Roger and Jacare slap hands, then a few seconds later, a whistle blows. In what arguably remains the most controversial final in Mundials history, Jacare wins on points.

MATCH LENGTH: 10 MINS
LOCATION: RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
DATE: JUNE 2004
EVENT: IBJJF MUNDIALS
VENUE: TIJUCA TENNIS CLUBE
ATTENDANCE: 4,500

AFTERMATH

Unsurprisingly, the result generated plenty of debate. Roger had applied a submission to its fullest extent, yet the referee was unmoved. Jacare demonstrated the disturbing fact that a willingness to accept serious injury could be a winning strategy in an IBJJF competition. Jacare had also exposed some other major flaws in the IBJJF rules, avoiding disqualification even though he had run from his opponent for a full minute with no less than seven restarts. Some praised Jacare for his fortitude in toughing out a dislocated elbow. Others were outraged that the most prestigious title in BJJ had been won after unashamed stalling. Jacare shouted to the press, "I regret nothing!"

After the fight, the two men took different paths. Roger went on to stake a solid claim as the greatest competitor in the history of the sport. He would soon avenge his loss, beating Jacare in the IBJJF Europeans the following year, then again in the finals of the 2005 ADCC. Roger made sure to choke him this time, a submission that even somebody as stubborn as Jacare could not ignore. However, Jacare wasn't done in the Mundials: he was able to triumph over Roger in the 2005 Absolute final. Just like in 2004, it was controversial, due to Jacare winning via takedown points many felt he should not have been awarded.

Having dominated jiu jitsu, Roger shifted his attention to MMA, where he currently has a 7-2 record. Jacare made that shift earlier, taking his first steps into a new sport in 2003. According to MMAFighting.com, his injury against Roger was an important factor in fully shifting his focus to MMA. Jacare is quoted as stating that "I left jiu-jitsu for MMA because they [the IBJJF] never came to me asking if I needed anything. I was starving in Rio with a busted arm. My physical therapist was on the same street as the IBJJF in Rio. I saw them all the time."

Jacare has left jiu jitsu competition behind, racking up a 22-4 record so far in MMA. Roger has also been absent from the highest levels of BJJ competition since his last Mundials gold in 2010, appearing in only two noteworthy jiu jitsu matches (a draw with Buchecha at Metamoris in 2012 and a victory over Rodrigo Comprido at last year's UFC Expo). Roger has hinted at a return to his old hunting grounds, plans which were delayed due to a scheduled MMA fight in 2015. BJJ fans are hoping that 2016 might see Roger making history on the mats once again.

SOURCES: GRACIEMAG • FLOGRAPPLING • BJJHEROES.COM • MMAFIGHTING.COM • IBJJF.ORG • SHERDOG.COM • TATAME

POSITION STUDY

50/50 GUARD

THE 50/50 GUARD IS A GRAPPLING POSITION COMMONLY USED IN THE BJJ SPORTING ENVIRONMENT. A GUARD IS CLASSED AS 50/50 ONCE TWO ATHLETES INVOLVED IN A GRAPPLING MATCH BECOME LOCKED, WITH THEIR LEGS INTERTWINED, THUS PROVIDING THE SAME SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES FOR BOTH PLAYERS, WHICH IS THE REASON BEHIND THE "50/50" DESIGNATION.

This guard is often associated with stalling in BJJ's competitive platform, particularly in recent years with the ban on knee-reaping and heel hooks, which are prime situations that can occur from the 50/50 position.

THE HISTORY OF THE 50/50 GUARD

The guard has existed for many decades and although reversals did exist from the 50/50 position many years ago, it was not regarded as a thought-out guard concept, but more as a consequence of a grappling exchange. Prior to 2009, the highest profile match the jiu jitsu community had witnessed where the 50/50 was put to use, was the 2004 final of the World Championship open weight division between Roger Gracie and Ronaldo Jacare when the two athletes were entangled for a few minutes with Roger nearly getting a sweep. Again, this was a consequence of a grappling exchange, as mentioned by Roger Gracie in an interview years after the match, and not an actual thought out game plan.

Game planning and the 50/50 guard appeared a few years later, a process brewed in the lower belt divisions by the Mendes Bros. These two paved the way for modern jiu jitsu around 2007/08, breaking through the scene with their innovative games.

The new Mendes Bros style brought a different flavour to the sport. One aspect of their game that quickly gained notoriety was the berimbolo, a back attack that resembled a scramble coming from a variety of angles, but mostly from the de la Riva guard and the double guard pull. This Berimbolo scramble often led to the leg entanglement that we now call 50/50. Seeing this as an opportunity to enhance this "dead position" and be one step ahead of the game, Rafa and Gui Mendes, as well as their team mates at Atos Jiu Jitsu, dedicated plenty of thought to the position, developing a wide range of moves from sweeps to back attacks.

50/50 GUARD CONTROVERSY

The new developments brought forward by the Atos team in the late 2000s were quickly disregarded by the majority of the grappling community, particularly after the 2009 World Championship featherweight black belt semi-final between Rafa Mendes and Rubens Charles Cobrinha, a match where the two competitors were stuck in the 50/50 position for nine and a half minutes exchanging sweeps and futile toe hold attempts. This match would set the pace for countless others spent under the same circumstances.

The objection towards this guard lay in the fact that when faced with the 50/50 guard, none of the competitors could or would advance in the match and move towards the submission, the ultimate goal of a jiu jitsu contest. Instead, both competitors were stuck in a battle for advantages. Knowing that either could achieve a sweep, many started faking a sweep to get ahead on the score-board by an advantage, and wear down the clock – something that would take place more often when both grapplers were evenly matched.

TECHNICAL ADVANCES

As aforementioned, the 50/50 guard was frowned upon by many, much like had happened with previous additions to the game during the 1990s, including positions now deemed "traditional" such as the spider guard and toe hold. Slowly, the 50/50 became accepted as just another chapter in the BJJ curriculum.

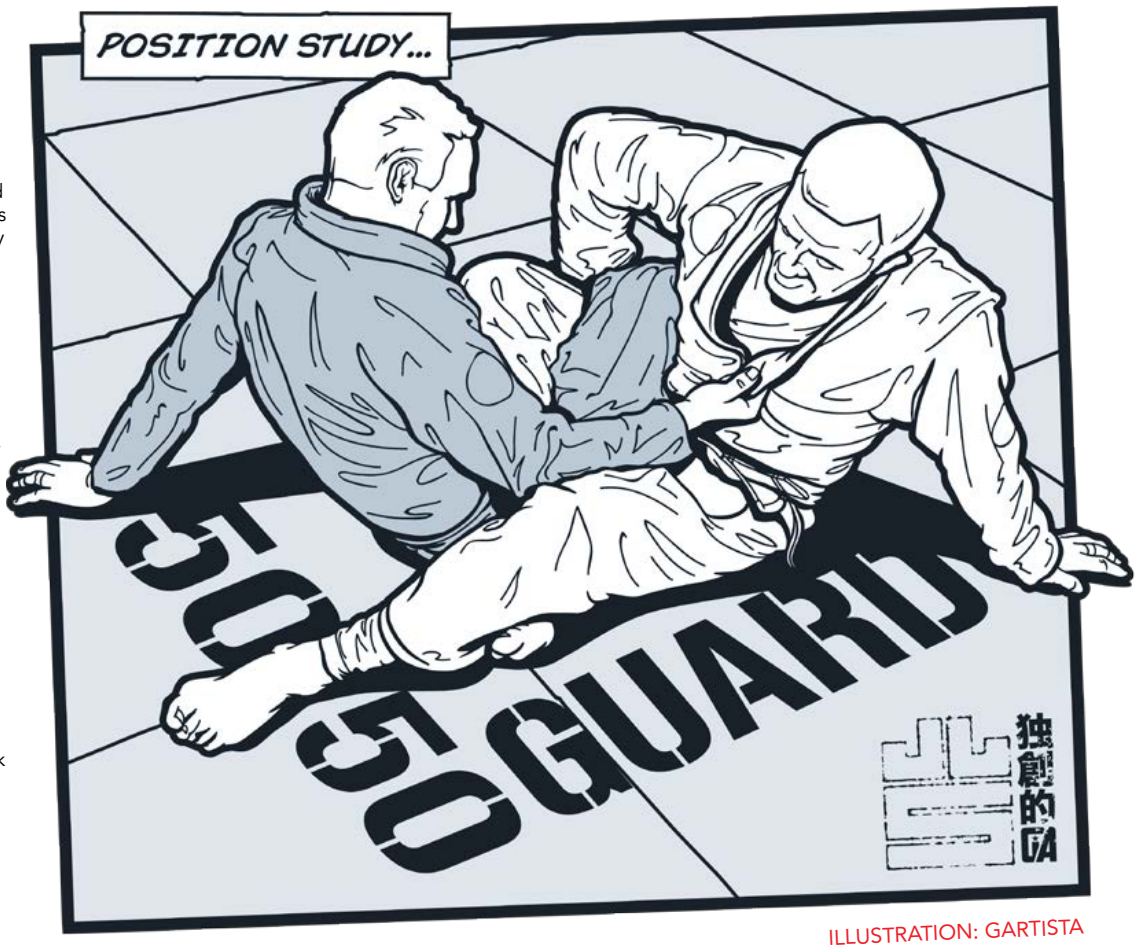


ILLUSTRATION: GARTISTA

With the acceptance of this guard, many of the sport's top athletes began studying the position, adding their own imprint to the 50/50. One of the more popular uses for this leg entanglement became the "botinha" lock, a variation of the straight ankle lock made famous by Rodrigo Cavaca and his students (taught to Cavaca by Roli Delgado and Max Bishop).

WORDS: ANDRE BORGES, EDITOR AT WWW.BJJHEROES.COM

estiloLEVE

ULTRALIGHT COMPETITION KIMONO

TATAMIFIGHTWEAR.COM

BELT PROMOTIONS

IF YOU WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE AWARDED A NEW BELT RECENTLY, THIS PAGE REPRESENTS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SAVOUR THE MOMENT WITH RECOGNITION IN JIU JITSU STYLE! SEND IN DETAILS OF YOUR RECENT PROMOTION, INCLUDING THE RANK YOU ACHIEVED AND YOUR INSTRUCTOR'S NAME, AND WE WILL PUBLISH AS MANY AS WE CAN IN OUR MAGAZINE.

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO U2US@BJJSTYLE.COM

Adam Ellis was promoted to brown belt by Andy Roberts.

Fredy Banegas was promoted to purple belt by Marcelo Garcia in New York.

Joshua Peters (left) and Nicholas Robison of College Park MMA were promoted to black belt by Carlos "David" Oliveira.

Bira Lima received his black belt from Robson 'Pit' Medeiros Escaleira.

Viking Wong and Duncan West were promoted to black belt under Jude Samuel.

Oli Geddes promoted Artemiy Vasilenko, Ivan Cernii, Vyacheslav Grigorov, and Nikolai Batrakov to blue belt in the city of Chisinau in Moldova.

Chris Vloothuis was promoted to blue belt under Professor Gui Mendes and PJ O'Sullivan.

ICON JJ Team promotion in Holland: Olivier Collomb (black belt), JC Herbert (black belt), Nico Herbert (black belt), Lennart Hoopman (1st degree), Farzin Karbalai-Sadegh (1st degree), Farid Ben Omar (2nd degree), Jessie Gibbs (2st degree) Reggi Rink (black belt - 10th from the left), Francis Thode (black belt), Alex Ramirez (black belt).

Igor Terreco was promoted to brown belt by Cesar Lima, Roger Gracie Team.

Ruth Hwu was promoted to blue belt by Sam Joseph at Buckhead Jiu Jitsu in Atlanta.

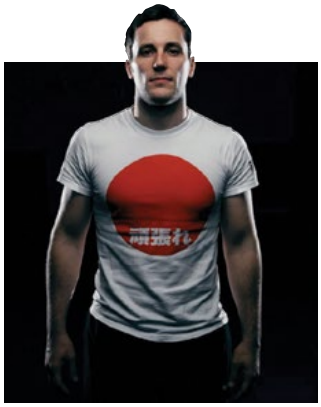
Marc Delacruz was promoted to purple belt by Professor Eduardo Santos.

William G. Littaua was promoted to blue belt under Rodrigo "Comprido" Medeiros and Marcelo Cazuza.

Dave Sulkin was promoted to black belt by Noah Spear at Platoon Jiu Jitsu.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

WHY MMA STILL CHAMPIONS JIU JITSU



Like millions of fight fans around the world, March 5th saw me glued to the TV screen, hotly anticipating UFC 196 and – more specifically – Conor McGregor's latest outing in the Octagon.

Now whether you're a McGregor fan or not (and I certainly am) you cannot deny that he possesses one giant set of kahunas. If jumping up from featherweight to face the lightweight champ Rafael Dos Anjos wasn't enough, refusing to reschedule and taking on Nate Diaz at 170lb was one of the gutsiest things I've witnessed since the days of BJ Penn.

Unless you've recently returned from a stint on the moon, you'll be fully aware that despite starting the fight in typical style by lighting up his opponent with strikes, McGregor went on to lose via rear naked choke in the second round. What followed this shock defeat was a tirade of articles, social media posts, memes and conversations at jiu jitsu schools across the globe - all something along the lines of, 'if you don't know jiu jitsu you're in big trouble' and 'McGregor's jiu jitsu sucks'. I'd agree with the first part.

Unlike many combats sports, which often go to extreme lengths to deny the rise of MMA and distance themselves accordingly, us outlandish jiu jitsu players happily embrace our art's roots within the realm of the 4oz glove. Not only is BJJ an integral part of grappling and – therefore – MMA, it is this association with MMA which has enabled BJJ to grow so quickly. As a fight fan and a jiu jitsu practitioner, I greet every victory for grappling in the Octagon with open arms, as it is the most powerful publicity tool we could ever hope for – Olympic status included. It also rams home the age-old message that you cannot neglect your grappling any more than you can neglect your striking.

So jiu jitsu in MMA is alive and kicking. Agreed. I was, however, surprised to see how many closet black belts came out of the woodwork to make sure we all realised that McGregor's jiu jitsu sucks – I can assure you this isn't true. My good friend, training partner and talented jiu jitsu fighter, Kywan Gracie-Behring, once fought McGregor at the European Nogi Championships and it was a very even match. Knowing the level of jiu jitsu my buddy Kywan possesses, I can vouch for the fact that McGregor is no slouch on the ground.

Meisha Tate chokes out Holly Holm at UFC 196.

I've never trained for an MMA fight, but I am fully aware that my experience of training jiu jitsu purely in a sport (and to an extent self-defence) context would not give me automatic ninja rights inside a cage. Yes, McGregor appeared to get mounted easily, yes he gave his back up easily, but neglecting to take into consideration the succession of punches he absorbed moments beforehand, and the effect they would have had on his ability to respond would be foolish. You know how the saying goes, 'punch a black belt once, he becomes a brown belt…'

In my eyes, the best advert for jiu jitsu at UFC 196 was in the co-main event between Holly Holm and Miesha Tate. Coming off the back of her KO victory over the rock star, Ronda Rousey, Holm was firmly touted as number one in the division. Much like Rousey and her judo, Holm's obvious strengths lie in her striking, having been crowned a boxing world champion on multiple occasions.

Despite taking substantial damage during striking exchanges throughout the match, Tate reverted to her grappling textbook. She took her opponent down, transitioned to the back, sunk in a rear naked choke and didn't stop squeezing until her opponent went limp – a thing of beauty. The seemingly invincible and previously undefeated Holm was put to sleep in a display that truly championed the art of Brazilian jiu jitsu.

Switching gears, I'd like to draw your attention to the fantastic article by Liam O'Neill in this issue, *Visiting Rio*. Liam really has created a fantastic resource for anyone looking to make their way to Rio de Janeiro, covering places to train, times to visit, how much you can expect to pay for food, things to avoid etc. Making the trip to the home of BJJ is one for the bucket list of all jiu jitsu practitioners, so do make sure you check this feature out.

CALLUM MEDCRAFT

"IN MY EYES, THE BEST ADVERT FOR JIU JITSU AT UFC 196 WAS IN THE CO-MAIN EVENT BETWEEN HOLLY HOLM AND MIESHA TATE"

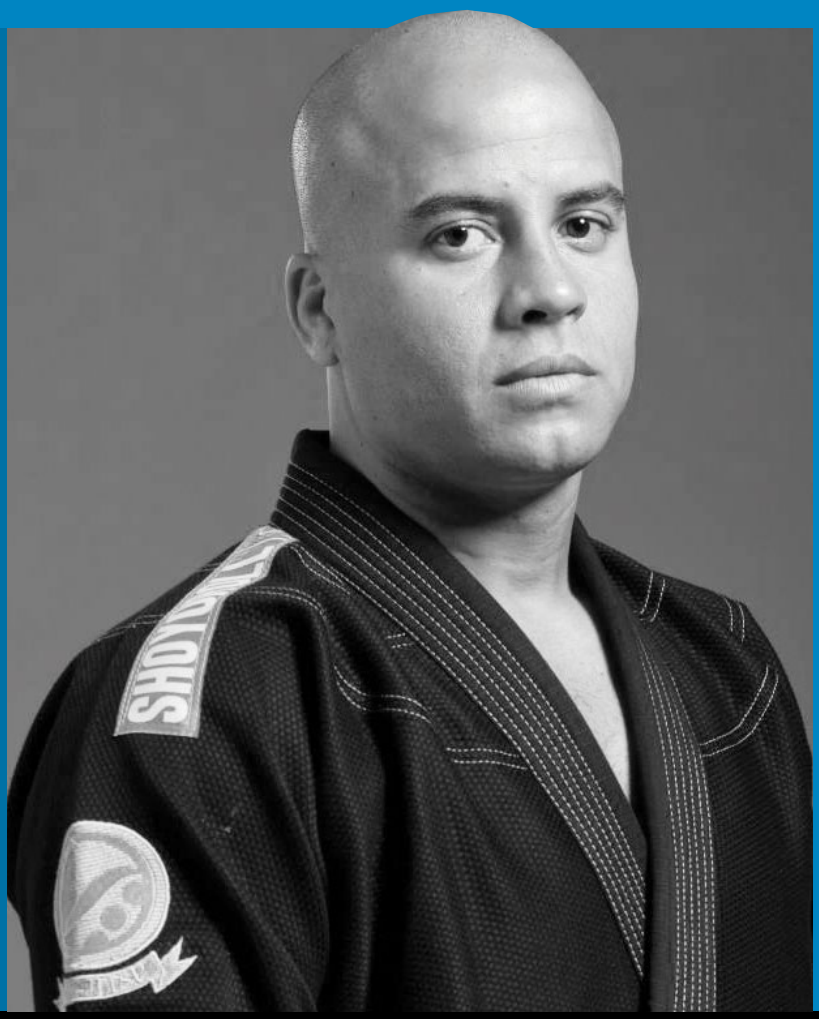
estiloLEVE
ULTRALIGHT COMPETITION KIMONO
tatami
TATAMIFIGHTWEAR.COM

IT'S SCIENCE

BY TYLER BISHOP

LEO VIEIRA

LEO VIEIRA IS ONE OF THE FIRST JIU JITSU CHAMPIONS TO BECOME KNOWN FOR HIS EYE-CATCHING, DYNAMIC APPROACH TO JIU JITSU. A BLACK BELT UNDER ROMERO CAVALCANTI, 'LEOZINHO' IS AN IBJJF WORLD CHAMPION AND A 2X ADCC CHAMPION.



27% OF VIEIRA'S MATCHES WERE WON BY BACK CHOKE

BISHOPBJJ.COM
THE SCIENCE OF JIU JITSU

'It's Science' is brought to you by BishopBjj.com. The goal of BishopBjj.com is to expand and empower the jiu jitsu community by emphasising the science and art of jiu jitsu in fun and exciting ways. We want to highlight what makes jiu jitsu so calculated, but also what makes it so much fun.

78%

OF VIEIRA'S WINS WERE BY SUBMISSION

VIEIRA SECURED SWEEPS FROM SIX DIFFERENT GUARD POSITIONS

48%

OF HIS SWEEPS CAME FROM SPIDER OR DE LA RIVA GUARD

52%

OF HIS PASSES CAME FROM A STANDING POSITION

VIEIRA SCORED FIRST IN EVERY MATCH HE WON

93%

OF VIEIRA'S MATCHES ENDED IN VICTORY

ABSTRACT:

All matches observed of Leo Vieira, used in this small sample occurred at well-recognised jiu jitsu events, inside his weight division, wearing the gi, and in the years 2003-2012. Only techniques, occurrences, and outcomes that were recorded are displayed in the data below (i.e. if no butterfly sweeps occurred, there will not be a representation of that in the sample data charts). Matches were selected at random based on freely available matches. This is a limited sample but – given the estimated number of matches in this time period – it is well above the percentage necessary to create a scientifically validated trend sampling.

TOTAL MATCHES OBSERVED	15
TOTAL MINUTES OBSERVED	105
MATCHES WON BY SUBMISSION	11
MATCHES WON BY POINTS	03
OPPONENT WON MATCH	01
TOTAL MATCHES DRAWN	00
TOTAL MATCHES WON	14

THE BREAKDOWN

Leo Vieira is a legend, he is one of the most accomplished jiu jitsu athletes of all time. However, I would argue that the most impressive thing about Vieira is not his collection of gold medals. I contend that it is the revolutionary techniques he used to win those events that truly cemented his amazing legacy as a jiu jitsu pioneer and all-time great champion.

One of the most interesting things about this study is just how much current athletes owe to the innovations that Leo Vieira helped bring to the forefront of competition jiu jitsu. What you'll see is that Leo paved the way for many of the modern techniques we see from today's jiu jitsu athletes.

THE STUDY

Studying Leo Vieira was a real treat. In many cases, when we've studied past jiu jitsu champions, we've noticed a stark contrast between the games played a decade ago and the games that are played by today's athletes. With Leozinho this was not the case; observing him was like observing one of today's most innovative athletes. In a lot of ways, Leo Vieira had many of the traits we saw when we looked closely at Rafa Mendes.

In the matches we viewed Vieira he had an impressive 93% win rate. His submission rate in those wins ended up being approximately 78%, one of the highest we've ever recorded! This is a testament to just how far ahead of his opponents Leo was. This was common in many of the matches we watched. To this point we have not seen in our match samples an athlete consistently outplay his opponents as frequently as Vieira did.

What makes Leo truly special is that you can find something beautiful and precise in just about every element of his game. He found ways to pass the guard from everywhere, although he did prefer to pass from standing 52% of the time. He even averaged 1.13 passes per match.

His sweep game was equally as diverse. He was able to sweep his opponent from six different positions, with 48% of those sweeps coming from de la Riva or spider guard.

Leo Vieira truly deserves the title of submission savant. He found unique ways to get the submission in an incredibly significant number of his matches, and what's more, he made it seem effortless. Many times, our study subjects have a very strict regime where they seek out specific submissions. Vieira seemed to have no specific preference; rather he put his opponents into extremely compromised situations and took the first available submission. A choke from the back ended up being the most common occurrence (it took place in 27% of all of his matches).

Ultimately, it's what you can't see in the numbers that makes Leo's legacy so strong. His innovative technique enabled him to strongly out-match many of his early opponents. This is probably why so many of us remember Leo's beautiful technique as he was able to showcase so much of it due to his ability to overwhelm opponents.

Leo Vieira will remain a legend in the jiu jitsu community. However, he should also be given due credit for paving the way for many of the modern styles that exist today. The most revealing thing in this study was just how far ahead of the game Vieira appeared to be. This should truly help carve his name on the list of most impactful athletes in jiu jitsu history.

SWEEP (POSITION)

DE LA RIVA	3
CLOSED GUARD	1
HALF GUARD	1
SPIDER GUARD	3
X-GUARD	2
BUTTERFLY GUARD	3

SWEEP (TYPE)

ANKLE PICK	1
X-GUARD	3
TOMANAGI	2
SCISSOR	2
HOOK SWEEPS	3
TRIPS/OFF BALANCING	1
COLLAR DRAG/ARM DRAG	1

PASS (POSITION)

ON KNEES	6
HALF-GUARD	2
STANDING	9

PASS (TYPE)

LEG DRAG	4
KNEE OVER	3
KNEE THROUGH	2
X-PASS	1
LEG-WEAVE	3
KNEE CUT FROM HALF GUARD	1
REVERSE SITTING HALF GUARD	1
CARTWHEEL	1
UNDER THE LEGS	1

TAKING THE BACK

SIDE CONTROL	1
FROM PASSING THE GUARD	1
TURTLE	1
MOUNT	1

SUBMISSION (POSITION)

BACK	4
SIDE CONTROL	2
MOUNT	3
CLOSED GUARD	1
KNEE ON BELLY	1

SUBMISSION (TYPE)

CHOKE FROM BACK	4
KIMURA/AMERICANA	1
ARMBAR	3
CROSS COLLAR TOP	1
CROSS COLLAR BOTTOM	1
TRIANGLE	1

SUMMARY

SUCCESSES: STANDING GUARD PASSES

AVOIDED: BOTTOM HALF GUARD

TOP TECHNIQUES: STANDING GUARD PASSES & DE LA RIVA

HISTORY 101:
KIOTO BJJ TEAM

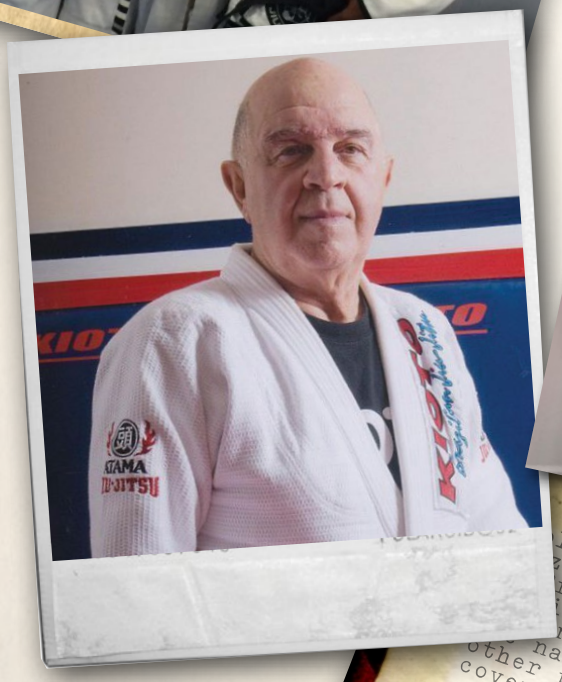
Francisco Mansur (or Mansor, as his name also often appears) is in a select group. He is one of only six people without the Gracie surname who can boast of an instructor's degree from Helio, as well as a red belt. Born in 1940, Mansur initially learned jiu jitsu from his father, who had taken a few private classes. At the age of 15, Mansur left his home town of Muriaé in order to study in Rio de Janeiro. His intention was to become a pilot in the air force: as it turned out, after six months at flight school in Campo Grande, he realised it was not where his passion lay. Upon arrival in Rio, what he had really wanted to do was meet the famous Helio Gracie, to which end he immediately set off for the Academia Gracie. Mansur remembers being amazed by the floor to ceiling mirrors all around the luxuriously appointed school, where he did indeed get to speak with his hero. Unfortunately, the prices were well out of his reach at that time.

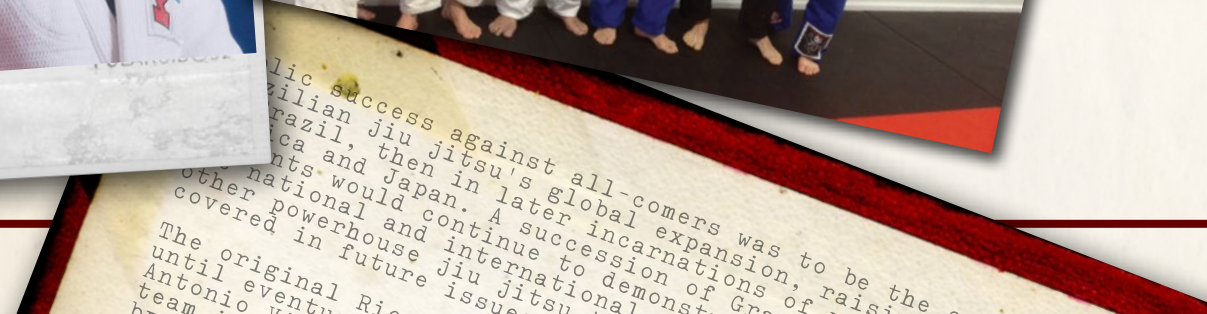
Instead, he began swimming at the YMCA to stay in shape, until eventually he decided to try out the judo classes there. He trained voraciously, soon becoming a formidable judoka. Some time later, Helio was annoyed at a lack of opponents, so vented his frustration in a magazine. He proclaimed that judo fighters were all 'cowards'. Mansur wanted to prove him wrong, although his judo sensei was opposed to the idea. As Mansur puts it in his interview with BJJ Tour, "My intentions were not to prove that I was good: I wanted to prove I was a man."

It's a story Mansur relishes telling, cropping up repeatedly in his interviews. He proudly relates how he was true to his word, arriving at Helio's school ready to fight. Gracie put him up against one of his students, Moacir Luzia Vale. The fight got heated after an accidental blow to Mansur's face, prompting him to retaliate. Helio brought a halt to proceedings. Helio insisted that if Mansur wanted to throw punches, he would need a new opponent: that man was Ivan Gomes, a marine. He put a beating on Mansur, but the judoka refused to give up. Mansur remembers that Helio was impressed by his courage and invited him back, telling him not to worry about the money. According to Mansur, "From that day on I was glued to him. We became really good friends: he is like a second father to me."

Like many students during the '50s, Mansur's training included occasionally stepping up to represent the academy in vale tudo. Beginning at 17 years old, he would retire undefeated after 39 victories in the ring. At the seminal 1961 clash between Zulu and a young Rickson Gracie, Mansur got to experience the fight from another perspective, as the referee. It was up to him to wipe off the oil that Zulu tried to use to gain an advantage. By 1965, Mansur felt ready to open up his own school, Academia Kioto de Jiu-Jitsu, better known today as Kioto BJJ. In a nod to Mansur's judo roots, the logo features a stylised throw. Despite his accomplishments, Mansur is humble about the origins of Kioto BJJ. As he told Alfredo Tucci, "The Kioto BJJ system that I developed is not my invention. Helio is the inventor of this art, the novelty in Kioto Jiu-Jitsu is only in the teaching methods."

Mansur had plenty of life experience off the mats too, spending 35 years as a police officer on the notoriously tough streets of Rio de Janeiro.





199
BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU
FIGHTING FOR A UNITED SINCERELY
KIOTO
RICKSON X REI ZULU
Um faixa preta que vai usar a técnica
O antigo segurança que bate sem pena

He suffered eleven bullet wounds over the course of his career, the worst attack coming on the 25th August 1993, when he says he was attacked by five men hired to kill him. Although seriously wounded, after almost forty days in hospital, Mansur recovered. A few years later in 1998, he joined the growing number of Brazilian jiu jitsu instructors capitalising on the growing interest in the United States. Mansur set up shop in New York, leaving his academy back home in the hands of his nephew Alvaro Mansur (today best known as the head referee for the IBJJF) and Kraus Mansur.

Alvaro would go on to set up his own team in 2008, Soul Fighters. He was followed by a number of Kioto BJJ students, including perhaps the most successful competitor to earn a black belt from Francisco Mansur: Augusto 'Tanquinho' Mendes. Tanquinho ('Little Tank', as his older brother already had the nickname 'Tanque') won the Mundials at blue and purple while still fighting under the Kioto BJJ banner, along with a silver at brown. He followed that up with a gold medal as a black belt under Soul Fighters in 2013 and has now refocused on a budding MMA career. Several other important teams have a lineage which can also be traced back to Mansur, such as Claudio Franca BJJ and Brazil 021. As Franca put it to GracieMag:

"I started training when I was a kid. My grandparents and mother took me. First I did judo, then I transferred to Grandmaster Francisco Mansur's Kioto Jiu-Jitsu Academy. I've been training with him ever since. Now we're kind of far apart, him being in New York, but he's still my friend, teacher and mentor. He's someone who I listen to in Jiu-Jitsu."

Milton Regis has close connections to Mansur. Not only has he trained under the Kioto BJJ founder since he was a child, Regis is also married to Mansur's daughter. He moved to the US in 2001, initially living in Boston (encouraged by his sister, already a US resident). He later headed to New York to reconnect with Mansur, where he currently heads up the Sayville branch of Kioto BJJ. The US team has been going from strength to strength, with native US blacks belts coming through too, such as Greg Melita. Over five decades into its history, Kioto BJJ is still going strong.

TIMELINE

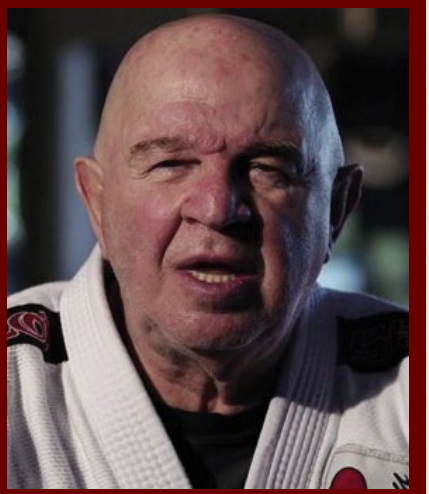
1940
Francisco Mansur arrives in the world

1955
Mansur leaves Muriaé for Rio de Janeiro

1961
Mansur referees the Zulu vs Rickson fight

1965
Kioto BJJ is founded

1998
Mansur moves to the US



2001
Milton Regis moves to the US

2014
Greg Melita is awarded his black belt

SOURCES: *DIE FAMILIE GRACIE UND DIE REVOLUTION IM JIU JITSU*, MARCELO ALONSI & ALFREDO TUCCI • *CHOQUE*, ROBERTO PEDREIRA • KIOTOBJJ.COM • INTERVIEW WITH MANSUR & MILTON REGIS, PRODUCED BY PLATINUM PLATYPUS • INTERVIEW WITH MANSUR BY DANIEL CARETTONI • WORLDWIDEDOJO.COM • HUMANS OF JIU JITSU • GRACIEMAG • BJJHEROES.COM

WORDS: TOM BELL
PICTURES: JOSHUA HALVATZIS

NOVA GERACAO'S NOVA GERACAO

A gold medalist at his 1994 debut at the Brazilian Nationals, Eduardo Goncalves moved to London in 2008 as one of only a few Nova Geracao (New Generation) black belts.

Edu talks here about two chance meetings with people who changed his jiu jitsu path forever, whilst recalling life in Rio under Francisco 'Toco' Albuquerque.

Tell us about discovering jiu jitsu; at the time your brother was already training and then your mother suggested doing it alongside him.
My older brother used to study in the school which was very close to our house in a famous neighbourhood called Humaita, which of course houses a very famous jiu jitsu school called Gracie Humaita. Helio used to teach there.

The High School where he studied had Gracie Humaita at the top of the school, on the fourth floor. He heard about this jiu jitsu and he wanted to try it, so my mum said, 'Of course, but you have to take your younger brother'. I was being taught by Royler and Rolker [Gracie]. Their kids programme was a lot of fun, but it wasn't very competition orientated, or at that time it wasn't.

We never stay indoors in Rio so you meet a lot of friends. I was playing football and I met this kid, Henrique Gama Filho. He was talking about the jiu jitsu where he was from and he told me he got third place at the Brazilian Nationals. Man, I was intrigued.

I started to hang with him more and it turned out his family were the Gama Filho family. His dad, Professor Pedro Gama Filho, who has done a lot for jiu jitsu, used to drive us to the academy. I got there and saw a different kind of training. It was amazing. It was there, under 'Toco' that I started my love for competition. My first competition was the Brazilian Nationals and I won it. I was just a kid; it was 1994.

Let's talk a little bit about Toco (Francisco Albuquerque) then, a man well known for his social work and projects to help kids train jiu jitsu. You were a kid under him, what kind of a man was he?
Oh man. First of all, Toco is extremely funny. He's always joking around and having fun with everybody. He talks a lot and you can never, ever get bored with him. I'm talking about Toco now from an adult's view, so imagine what I saw when I was a kid.

Since I remember, he has always had a social project. He always invited favela kids to train for free in the academy. I always grew up training alongside poorer kids, but the academy is in the most expensive area of Rio - Leblon. Favela kids couldn't afford to train, so if it weren't for Toco teaching jiu jitsu to them, they wouldn't be making their living from jiu jitsu all over the world. If it wasn't for him I'm not sure all those guys would have made it out.

To be honest man, Nova Geracao is in my soul. Even if one day there are problems or I decide to put up another flag, they're always going to be inside of me. Without them, my story is nothing. I can't tell my story to you without saying Toco or Nova Geracao.

As a black belt in 2008, you represented a new generation of Nova Geracao. Tell us about moving to London at that time.
Man, it's a funny story. When I came to the UK I didn't come with the intention to live off jiu jitsu. I just wanted to learn English for when I went back to Rio, so experiencing it seemed a good idea.

> "I FEEL IT IS A PRIVILEGE THAT VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE IN THIS WORLD AND THAT IS THE PRIVILEGE TO TRAIN WITH YOUR BEST FRIENDS"

I eventually found a job in the countryside, so my brother and I split up. He lived in the city and I lived in a village called Spalding. It was there that I had to learn; I was in a factory and I didn't know what to do. I had to learn to communicate. Once I'd learned the basics I moved back to London where I met Luiz Tosta.

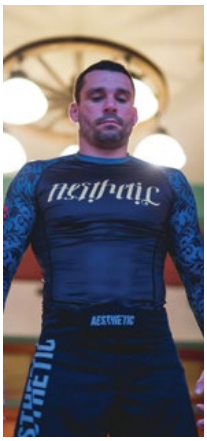
He's a man with a very strong mind who takes his training very seriously. He didn't mind me waving my Nova Geracao flag. I competed under that name and he never had time for politics, he just wants to train hard. He was completely the same as me, he just wanted to train and compete and that's it. I'm very glad that he let me continue to be Nova Geracao. Not many people know about Nova Geracao, not even in Rio, so it was very nice of him to let me do that. I was lucky, I think God has always put the right people in my life.

Did you actively seek out jiu jitsu in the UK?
Spalding had no jiu jitsu, so I found myself in a new place, but I just loved sports. I had so much on my mind at that time that jiu jitsu wasn't in there. I tried, I researched, I even thought about teaching, but I already had a job and I started to play football instead. I missed it a lot, but when I came back to London it was the first thing I thought about.

Luiz Tosta was a European Champion under Mario Reis. Did you know his name before you met him?
I knew Mario Reis and I knew who Luiz was. The first academy I tried actually was the Roger Gracie Academy. I don't think many people remember this, but I had a free trial there. Felipe de Souza was there at the time as well, but it was just too far from my house. The experience was amazing but I couldn't do it.

I was in Hyde Park playing football, I saw this small guy, he was stocky and had cauliflower ears and I said, 'Man, this guy *must* train jiu jitsu!' I had to ask him. He did train and it was Luiz Tosta. I introduced myself, explained I had just come to London and I wanted a place to train. He said, 'My friend, take my number. Call me tomorrow and we're going to train together'.

We started to train in the gi, but I liked to train nogi, so he took me to London Shootfighters, but I still trained in the gi



under Luiz. Then I found out, even though he's from the south of Brazil, that we had a lot of friends in common.

I suppose it must have been quite strange to bump into another Brazilian who also had a black belt?
Man, when I went to his academy and I trained there, I was finally happy, you know? I remember thinking, 'I want to come here every day, I want to teach, I want this again'. Jiu jitsu always made me feel closer to home. It always made me feel proud to be from Rio. Sometimes, when you're away from home, it's hard. These things can really knock you down; simple things like when you don't understand somebody, or

a nice girl is looking at you, but you don't even know how to talk to her. When I arrived, everybody was nice to me, we trained hard and then we'd eat lunch together; I said to myself, I can be complete again. It was the thing I was missing and it has changed my life. Luiz Tosta brought me back to jiu jitsu.

Well, it worked out for you. You now teach at London Shootfighters and you've made a lot of friends in your time here, such as the Black Thursday team, who are all extremely high-level guys. There's you, Luiz, Max Campos and Marco Canha to name a few - it must be a lot of fun for you!
I feel it is a privilege that very few people have in this world and that is the privilege to train with your best friends. You spend every Thursday trying to kill each other and trying to help each other. You may not be training with the absolute best, but when it's the best training for you then it is absolutely priceless.

It can only make me grow, to spend one day a week with my best friends. It's amazing, even if we sit and talk for two hours now, I cannot say anything negative about training with my friends at Black Thursday.

We're friends and we're very good to each other, but if you watch the training and you don't speak Portuguese, man you'd think we were trying to kill each other! We argue even about an advantage! But, it's just for the best, we want the best for each other.

You've been here around eight years now. There aren't many gyms in the UK that are over eight years old themselves. How have you seen the UK's love for jiu jitsu change?
Man, the way it was then and the way it is now, it's unbelievable; it's completely different. Everywhere in the UK now you're going to see some nice fights. You'll see guys that could be the future, you see supporting parents and you see media.

In my opinion, it's changed very fast. We are actually lucky: we have Braulio Estima, Victor Estima, Roger Gracie; they chose England to be home and, in my opinion, those guys could choose to live anywhere in the world and I think everyone will agree with me.

Everybody was pushed to their limits here, they started as small gyms but nobody wanted to be a pushover, so everybody trained hard. We have such a high standard now, but those guys are one of the reasons.

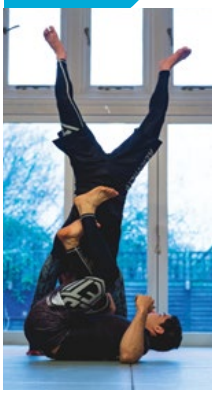
The growth, man, very soon we're going to have world champions and we're going to have big names. It is just a question of time. And I think, with the community, of course we have our beefs and of course have rivalries, but I think we're very united.

Finally then, Nova Geracao is, as you said, quite a small team. Flying that flag in the UK, what are the plans now that you teach in Ipswich and London?
I have a gym in Ipswich with one of my amazing brown belts and we have another in Alexandra Palace with another of my brown belts. I'm teaching at London Shootfighters East, but there is also now another black belt from Nova Geracao called Bruno Ferreira.

I will now tell you that this is a new thing, it's fresh. He's a good friend of mine, we have trained together for a very long time and he's running an academy in Wimbledon. From April or May I will be going to Florida to spend some time competing there; I am going to American Top Team to train. I decided to spend maybe six months to a year competing there, so I'm leaving everything to Bruno Ferreira to run. We're going to put our strengths together and run this well.

EDU GONCALVES

Edu is a Nova Geracao black belt and UK jiu jitsu stalwart since 2008



"To be honest man, Nova Geracao is in my soul. Even if one day there are problems or I decide to put up another flag, they're always going to be inside of me"

WORDS: TOM BELL
PICTURES: CALLUM MEDCRAFT

SAM GIBSON: SNOWBALL EFFECT

Sam Gibson, 25, is one of the youngest black belts in UK BJJ. The past year has been the peak of his jiu jitsu career so far, medaling at the Europeans and entering the Carlson Gracie London history books. His story is still young, but there's already plenty to tell.

Gibson's story started in a small Surrey village at a time when Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu was far from established in Europe, let alone in the UK. It's important to understand that at this time, blue belts were rarer than black belts are now. He was lucky though, as a lesser-spotted blue belt happened to be a local. His name was Steve Haydock and he's an important part of UK BJJ's history. Both Sam, and his dad Steve, managed to catch him and get some training in.

Sam was twelve years old and back then, whatever jiu jitsu you could find here (and that was if you were lucky) had no kids programme. He was a boy amongst men, but today he stands as a man leading boys, with a Carlson Gracie London black belt around his waist and his hunger to improve his jiu jitsu as evident as ever.

"Man, I've been doing this since I was a kid," Gibson explains. "I've just always wanted to be one of the best in the world and that's the main thing, but I just enjoy it man. I enjoy being there every day; I train hard, I drill, I lift weights, I see my friends and I'm not stuck in the rat race."

At 20 years of age, with links firmly established with Wilson Junior, Dickie Martin and Simon Hayes at Carlson Gracie London, like many late-teens Sam had developed itchy feet. He longed for more jiu jitsu and a bigger challenge. The best guys at Carlson's trained in London, he just needed to find a way to move there.

It was Dickie Martin who handed him that chance. Dickie was one of the instructors at Hammersmith and the gym was in need of a new receptionist. Sam got his chance to move but would no longer be the big fish in the small pond. He would be a purple belt, bursting with raw talent, but an unpolished diamond.

Even at the time, Gibson knew the move would change his life, but little did he know by how much. It's not uncommon to see Martin watching matside and coaching him intensely as Gibson competes against some of the best in the world. Martin, after all, is a world champion himself. Having been through the highs and lows of jiu jitsu personally, Martin now oversees the same in Gibson.

"Dickie has done a lot for me, to tell the truth. When I moved to London as a purple belt I didn't have the level. Alex Cabanes came along and helped me with some new styles of technique but Dickie is the one that brought me through. He sponsored me to fight all over the world and he taught me how to be a better competitor.

"He taught me how to train, how to think and how to be a better person. If I ever have a problem, I go and ask him. We have like a deep bond that you can only get through a tough sport like jiu jitsu; it comes when you're training together. He's seen me win, he's seen me lose, he's seen me ecstatic and he's seen me cry. We'll know each other for the rest of our lives.

"Without him I wouldn't be where I am today. I know that, 100 per cent. I wouldn't have ever had the opportunities he gave me, but it's more than that. It's the thought processes, he's taught me about life and the way people think. He's one of my best friends. I'm a young man and he's so much older than me but he saw me grow from this little kid, just twenty years old, to someone who can think for himself in this world and I'm grateful for that."

Speaking with Simon Hayes, one of Gibson's training partners, mentors and colleagues, he goes as far as suggesting that the Gibson-Martin relationship is deeper than that of student and coach. He suggests that Martin, as a coach, sees himself in Gibson. In terms of talent alone, that's been evident, but in terms of the fire that burns internally they both have the same goal: to be the best.

This year Gibson fell just short of his goal, a goal his coach had already achieved. He wanted European gold in his debut year at black belt; a big ask for any competitor, but one that Gibson with his undeniable talent and desire is capable of achieving. However, Martin identified what an achievement and learning experience his bronze medal

"WITH THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE COMES THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR GROWTH AND THEN, WITH THE HARD TRAINING, IT'S SOME COMBINATION"

estiloLEVE
ULTRALIGHT COMPETITION KIMONO
TATAMI
TATAMIFIGHTWEAR.COM

AESTHETIC

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST FOR EXCLUSIVE NEWS

FIGHTAESTHETIC.COM

really was, not just for Gibson, but for the Carlson Gracie Team as a whole.

Sam is the first of the Carlson Gracie UK team to reach a world class podium in the adult category and it's hard to imagine he will be the last. Sam has become more of an inspiration to his students and training partners than ever before.

"I was really upset when I lost the semi-final at the Europeans because I firmly believe I can beat these guys,"reflects Sam. "I lost, but afterwards Dickie told me how important that was for the gym; it shows people that they can do it too. If you've medalled, then other people will believe they can medal. I'm happy to be the person who helped with that.

"I ENJOY BEING THERE EVERY DAY. I TRAIN HARD, I DRILL, I LIFT WEIGHTS, I SEE MY FRIENDS AND I'M NOT STUCK IN THE RAT RACE"

"It changes what people think of you, and in a good way. People look up to you, they see you train hard and go out and put it on the line to win. They then want to be like you and in turn you can help them on their journey. It's all about helping and sharing. I'm really very happy to medal because I feel it gives me the opportunity to do that.

"It does make me proud because I work really hard man. I've been doing this for such a long time and you don't always get the results you want. At brown belt, I got to the quarter finals of every major tournament for two years running. I worked so hard but I would always fall at the last hurdle.

"That disappointment at the majors and then to finally make that break through; it starts with the bronze, then you work hard and it becomes silver and then gold. I can see and feel the progression in my career and for me to be on that podium was a very happy moment.

"As a team, we can work together and some of my best friends are going to achieve the same, like River and Mabast; they're going to achieve that and more. We're going to grow as a team as jiu jitsu becomes bigger in the UK."

That's River Dillon and Mabast Hussein; two more from the same team who are following Gibson's path. They too started as teenagers, have dominated in divisions, train full time and will represent Carlson Gracie team, tooth and nail. It is a system that Carlson Gracie London put in place and they will take raw talent then they will look to make you a true champion.

"It's a mentality instilled in us; we're a family and we all care for each other, but man, when we train, we train hard. It's a family environment and Dickie, Simon, Wilson and all the instructors have done a really good job at building a base with this atmosphere," says Sam.

"It's not just the level of training. If the atmosphere is wrong, you cannot be successful. With the right atmosphere comes the right attitude for growth and then, with the hard training, it's some combination."

Just recently, at the TUFF invitational, the Carlson Gracie team won every match on the submission-only card, bar two that ended in draws. That was under the watchful eye of Simon Hayes, who confidently bellowed 'Carlson Gracie' every time a team member's hand was raised.

There's a confidence and belief in Sam's words that perfectly summarises the Carlson Gracie team attitude and system. It would be easy to say that the message behind Gibson's European success is his talent, but that message has already been broadcast. The real statement made that day in Lisbon is that Gibson is the first of a new generation of younger CG fighters; the first of many.

SAM GIBSON

At 25, Sam is one of the youngest British BJJ black belts

"Dickie is the one that brought me through. He sponsored me to fight all over the world and he taught me how to be a better person"

Romulo Barral is undoubtably one of the all-time greats of Brazilian jiu jitsu, having racked up numerous major titles throughout his lengthy career.

WORDS: FELIX RODRIGUEZ

GRACIE BARRA IS ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU ASSOCIATIONS IN THE WORLD. THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL WAS ESTABLISHED BY CARLOS GRACIE JR. IN THE 1980S AND HAS PRODUCED SOME OF THE MOST HIGHLY REGARDED COMPETITORS TO STEP ON THE MATS IN THE LAST 30 YEARS. OUT OF ALL THE CHAMPIONS EVER TO WIN GOLD FOR GRACIE BARRA'S 'RED SHIELD,' FEW HAVE BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL AS ROMULO BARRAL.

ROMULO IS FORGING HIS LEGACY

"I MOVED TO TRAIN WITH DRACULINO. I STARTED TO WATCH HIM TRAIN, HE WAS THE FIRST GUY THAT I SAW WORKING KIND OF LIKE A SPIDER GUARD WITH A LASSOED LEG"

The four-time IBJJF World Champion has been one of the most dominant champions of the past decade. Barral has won everything there is to win throughout his years as an elite competitor. Just to name a few: Barral has won the Brazilian Nationals, the European Open, Pans, Worlds, World-Nogi and ADCC as a Meio Pesao and as an open weight competitor. The affable Brazilian sat down with *Jiu Jitsu Style* after winning double gold in the 2016 European Open to share the highs and lows of his long and illustrious career. This is his story.

FROM TKD AND MMA TO BJJ

Romulo Barral didn't choose Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu chose him. Barral was a fan of striking-based martial arts while growing up in Belo Horizonte. He began training in taekwondo as a young child, earning the rank of junior black belt at age 13. He grew up idolising Brazilian MMA pioneers like Vitor Belfort and Royce Gracie, and focused on training for an eventual career in mixed martial arts. Barral began training in BJJ out of necessity. At first he wasn't really interested in learning how to grapple, but began to learn jiu jitsu to prepare for submission specialists in MMA. It turns out Barral was a natural at grappling, the Gentle Art slowly won him over, and after training for a few years he quit TKD to focus solely on BJJ.

Barral recalls this transitional period fondly: "I actually started BJJ to complement my skill-set for an eventual career in MMA. Back then it was harder to get fights so I started competing in BJJ. I was doing well and my professors [Cristiano 'Titi' Lazarinni and Vinicius 'Draculino' Magalhaes] encouraged me to focus more on BJJ, telling me I'd do really well in it, and here I am now still competing after 15 years."

Romulo has a deep appreciation and respect for TKD because it provided him with a solid foundation for the work ethic and discipline needed to succeed in BJJ. After earning black belts in both, he believes both arts are "different, but can complement each other." That said, there is no question in his mind, which of the two is a more effective system of self-defence. "Now I understand way more about martial arts. I got my TKD black belt when I was 13 or 14; it was really quick. Eventually I learned self-defence, but I have realised, especially with martial arts that do black belts for kids, BJJ has a more realistic belting system as far as reflecting the belt holder's skill-set.

"In BJJ kids cannot, or should not, get a black belt. They need to be 18-19 years old and have trained for most if not their whole life to get it that young. Technically you shouldn't even be a blue belt until you turn 16 and transition from the youth ranking system. I think this is important because of the false sense of security a belt can give a person. A kid with a black belt can seriously over estimate their ability to defend themselves properly. BJJ is not like that. You start training at five now and eventually you get a green belt as a kid, then you start over as a blue belt and learn your whole process over until you get your black belt. And then is when you really start to learn and develop yourself as a martial artist and grow on and off the mats. I think BJJ is the best martial art because it gives the martial artist the most accurate method of assessing their actual self defence skills," said Barral.

BARRAL

DRACULINO AND THE GRACIE BARRA EFFECT

Romulo Barral has represented Gracie Barra's Red Shield since his first day as a white belt student under Titi Lazarini. Titi began teaching BJJ to Romulo as a purple belt under Vinicius 'Draculino' Magalhaes, and continued to do so until Romulo earned his blue belt as a 17 year-old. From this point on Draculino took over as his head instructor, moulding him into the medal-hording juggernaut he is today.

When describing his Gracie Barra pedigree Barral noted: "I started with Titi and he took me to Gracie Barra – Belo Horizonte. My instructor said it was best to go with Draculino to realise my full potential. I began seeing immediate results and he really impacted on my game. He taught me so much, from being a fighter to an instructor. He's great; I think to this day he is still on the mat teaching every class at his school. I used to train five times a day at his school and he was in all the classes. I soaked in everything he was teaching and I was one of his assistant instructors. I helped him in the mornings with the executive class, where I learned so much. I owe so much to him because he taught me my work ethic as well as my skill set. We tell him he should have more people helping him, and he has great assistants [in his school in Texas], but he likes to be there training, teaching and learning with his students each day. I actually am ready to just be a student for a little bit and plan on going to see him before Worlds to train and sharpen everything up. I haven't taken a full class with Drac since 2007, so I'm excited."

Draculino taught Romulo how to become one of the fiercest competitors the sport has ever seen, by challenging him mentally and physically within a nurturing environment that was not above tough love. The teacher and student share a special bond to this day that has helped shape Barral's jiu jitsu philosophy. He views BJJ as not only a martial art, but as an instrument of positivity. He noted, "BJJ is more than just submitting, it's about helping people grow. BJJ makes you grow every day, you get better and improve, but you don't improve individually, you do this organically with your teammates. As you get better so do they; each one feeds off the strength of the other and pushes the rest. My BJJ philosophy is simple; help my students, teach them the lifestyle, and make sure that the people who want to learn the art get a chance to develop. Don't do this on the mats only, just help people and don't expect anything back."

MASTERING THE SPIDER GUARD

Romulo Barral is an extremely technical grappler who is well known for his strong takedowns and his stellar guard game. He may be best known for his contributions to refining the spider guard and developing a highly successful system of sweeps and submissions from this position. Romulo first learned the fundamental concepts of the spider guard as a blue belt. He credits Titi and Draculino as the men responsible for giving him the tools necessary to turn the spider guard into the highly effective guard system he's won every major gi-based tournament with.

"I watched Titi compete as a brown belt when I was still a white or yellow belt and they didn't have brackets for us then. I went to watch him and he was playing with collar grips, basically the spider guard I play now. He won like six fights doing a basic collar grip sweep that looked like a Tomoe Nage sweep. Titi was getting under his opponents and sweeping them over his head. I watched that and when we got home to Belo Horizonte I asked him what he was doing. I told him 'I really like this position, can you teach me this one?' and he taught me the move, which I learned pretty well, but then I kind of got stuck with just having the one move. At first it worked great, but after a while it didn't because people adapted and then I would get my guard passed.

"Eventually I moved to train with Draculino; I started to watch him train, he was the first guy that I saw working kind of like a spider guard with a lassoed leg and I realised that this was really going to help my game. I watched and tried to do the same thing, throughout my first month with him, just breaking down the technique into smaller concepts like grips, hip positioning, setting off counter-pressure with the lasso leg, et cetera. When I broke everything down into smaller concepts I began to understand how all the parts worked as a whole better and I began to make big improvements in my game.

"From there I began expanding on the basic fundamentals of the spider guard concept and was able to develop a whole different game for myself. It's funny though, because all of these techniques came from becoming interested in one position I saw at Worlds and was able to develop into what I have now, after watching how Draculino used the lasso for spider guard, and connecting all these concepts together. Now they're my main game that I've played for 15 or 16 years, and 10 of those years were competing as a black belt," said Barral.

THE EVOLUTION OF COMPETITION

Earning a black belt in BJJ is a challenging task not many succeed at. Becoming an elite black belt competitor is even harder to accomplish. Competing for over a decade at the elite level, as Romulo has, is basically unheard of. He believes part of his success stems from his ability to stay ahead of the game by helping evolve it with his contributions to the spider guard, and from his ability to survive the evolutions that have shifted the way BJJ is played since then. He sees history repeating itself as he looks back on the growth of BJJ throughout his career. Success has always been predicated on a person's ability to adapt to the changes. For him, the only difference between then and now is the role reversal from being a hungry up-and-comer to being the storied champion.

When discussing the changing of the guard he noted: "I believe Roger, Jacare, Xande and guys like that from my generation are some of the best of all time, and then after them came Rodolfo and Buchecha, who are amazing. Now the newer guys like to play 50/50 guard a lot, berimbolos, berimbolos from top. I believe that my generation was the first one that had a more open game; we didn't do a lot of lapel stuff or 50/50. Me and the guys from my generation who are still competing, you know, we try to keep up and adapt to the new evolution in style and technique, but back then the game was more open. Today it is so much more competitive, matches are commonly decided by a single advantage, and it's not that they are better or anything like that, it's just a matter of accessibility to information that wasn't as available back then.

"Now there is YouTube, websites, online training, and stuff like that. Back then most of our information was developed in-house. It came from your professor and your training partners, sometimes new things would come along from people travelling and cross training, but it was much more limited. The opportunities to train and learn what other people and other academies are doing were not even close to what the new generations have access to today. Nowadays if you want to learn how Marcelo Garcia does an arm drag you can subscribe to his online program and learn it from the man himself, same as with the Mendes brothers, Braulio Estima, etc. That is the main difference I believe between this generation and mine; now there is so much information readily available and easily accessed."

Barral believes this abundance of information is good because the ability to expand your skillset is limitless, but from a competition standpoint it has also tightened the playing field, because things like film study and opponent preparation come into play. It's easier to prepare for opponents, know their tendencies and shut down their games. "The game today is much more close and there is a lot less room for error. Back when my generation was the new one, the game was much more open, everything is more equal now. Back then if you created a technique or a position you would hide it and keep it secret until the next major tournament and then surprise everyone with it so they didn't know how to defend it. Now

"WHEN I TRAIN FOR NOGI, LIKE WHEN I WON ADCC IN 2013, THAT YEAR I DIDN'T TRAIN WITH THE GI AT ALL"

everybody has seen everything, there are cameras everywhere, training gets filmed, and everyone puts out techniques on YouTube or on DVD. The element of surprise is not as big a factor as it used to be," said Barral.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY

Romulo Barral began making serious inroads towards becoming an elite black belt competitor after winning gold in the Brazilian National Championships and placing third at the Worlds. The following year was his coming out party. In 2007 Romulo won gold in his division and silver in the absolute at the Worlds. In addition to his first world championship he won double gold at Pans and the Brazilian National Championships for the second year in a row. Romulo gained international attention and recognition from competitors, fans and media sources alike. His dominance was not debatable and he was the media's consensus pick for competitor of the year after his impressive 2007 campaign. Since 2006, Barral has continued adding accolades and championships to his body of work each year, except for in 2008. According to Barral, 2008 was a transitional year where his career nearly ended due to an injury just as it began to pick up steam.

Injuries are part of the game that is Brazilian jiu jitsu. They are an irritable experience for BJJ lovers because they are inevitable and set us off track in our belt progression. Injuries are demoralising at all levels of the sport, and can be the catalyst for loss of interest in training. At Romulo's level getting injured is even more devastating, and learning how to bounce back is imperative in order to catch up and continue growing. Romulo's worst injury happened in 2007.

"I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER MENTIONED THIS IN AN INTERVIEW BEFORE, BUT I PRETTY MUCH TRAINED WITH ONLY ONE ARM FOR SO LONG"

He noted, "Injuries are scary, we don't need to add pressure to come back because then things stop being fun and you won't do as well. My shoulder injury was the worst. I wasn't able to move my arm for almost two years between 2007-2009. It was so bad that I didn't compete at all in 2008. I competed in the 2007 Worlds and after that my next competition was Pans in 2009. That was something serious, lots of people thought I was going to have to retire. I couldn't move my arm even after surgery, I had nerve damage throughout my shoulder, lost all the power and muscle in my arm and it took two whole years to recover physically. This was scary, but it was also very motivating. It made me want to come back so bad and do well again.

"I wanted to prove that bumps could happen in my life, but I could rise above them and accomplish my goals. I came back in 2009 and won Pans; I got gold at my weight and silver in the open class at Worlds. I finished 8 out of 11 fights in the tournament after not competing for two years, and this accomplishment is something that I'll cherish for the rest of my life, because I competed with no more than 40% power in my injured arm that year. I wasn't even healed yet, but I had so much desire to succeed that I willed myself to push for my goals to become a reality. Honestly, this is probably the accomplishment that I'm proudest of

> "MY SHOULDER INJURY WAS THE WORST. I WASN'T ABLE TO MOVE MY ARM FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS BETWEEN 2007-2009"

in my whole career, because I had such a nasty injury that got worse with surgery, and I could only train with my injured arm tucked into my belt for a year and a half.

"I don't think I've ever mentioned this in an interview before, but I pretty much trained with only one arm for so long that I had people like Carlos Gracie Jr. telling me to compete with just one arm because I learned to adapt and I was starting to give other black belts a hard time in training. This injury was scary, and bad, but it taught me a lot, especially that to be a champion you need to overcome hardships, and if you have the right mind-set anything can happen.

"The injury was also a blessing in disguise because it helped me get so much better; it forced me to be creative, and to address my non-dominant side. I had to stop relying on my go-to moves and best techniques; I had to dig deep and grow technically, the injury forced me to improve. I got so much better after that, and was able to win Worlds without being 100% because I was so sharp technically on my weak side that I was able to compensate for not being at full strength. I only had 40% power for my injured arm, but using it in addition to my non-injured arm made me feel like I had 200% of my normal power."

Romulo bounced back from his shoulder injury and continued ascending until sustaining a well-documented knee injury that required a cadaver transplant. "I hurt my knee in the prime of my career. Prior to my injury I was doing so well, I was only losing fights to guys like Roger Gracie, who is one of the best of all time. I was competing in Worlds against top talent and won by submission at least 7-8 of my 10 fights. It felt like it was my time, I was focused on winning double gold and came really close to pulling this off, but then I hurt my knee and it really affected my mental game. I was so close and I got injured, right as I was putting it all together for a special run and it stopped.

"After the injury I began putting so much pressure on myself to show everyone that I could come back stronger and resume where I left off. I created so much pressure and stress that things stopped being fun; I was always afraid to hurt my knee and that affected me a lot. It took me like two years to be able to trust my body to perform like it should instead of worrying if my knee could handle certain situations. Two whole years to start having fun again! I was injured in 2010, in 2011 I competed with so much pressure to prove something that it was not fun. I didn't like it at all and it made me want to stop.

"In 2012 I turned the corner; I decided to start over and ease off the pressure. I forgot everything that had happened to that point and started fresh. I told myself I'd compete in the Brazilian Nationals and anywhere else I could. My new mentality took the stress away, things became fun again and I got back to winning. My knee injury affected me more mentally than physically and I learned a lot from that experience. I learned that injuries are going to happen, and that we need to mentally prepare ourselves to cope with them.

2013: A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Romulo rose above two devastating injuries that nearly broke his spirit with a new grit and resolve. He knew his mind was unbreakable and learned to trust his body to perform while having fun doing so. Romulo followed up 2012 with his most successful campaign to date in 2013. That year, Barral won his first ADCC championship, his fourth IBJJF World title and

"I'M NOT TRYING TO STOP. I WANT TO CONTINUE BUILDING MY LEGACY ALONG WITH MY STUDENTS, I DON'T HAVE A REASON TO STOP"

his first European Open Championship. And he did it (mostly) without the gi.

"My game with the gi, everyone knows I use a lot of grips. When I train for nogi, like when I won ADCC in 2013, that year I didn't train with the gi at all. I was like, OK no gi. I had to get out of the habit of relying on grips. Different people have different opinions, but in my case, putting the gi away made a big difference. If we go by hours on the mat, the amount that I train with the gi, I am a legit black belt. The amount I train without my gi, I think I'm actually a really good purple belt. I'm still developing, I'm still learning, I feel like I can still improve a lot, honestly, my game in nogi is still very limited, especially compared to my gi game. I mean, yes I can do well, but in my vision, gi versus no gi, if I want to keep improving then I have to push myself to develop a new and completely different style than what I do with the gi already.

"For example, sometimes you see Marcelo Garcia; his game is very similar with the gi on or off, he doesn't need to do a whole lot different when he takes his gi off. I can't have a similar game for both because I play spider guard. I can't grab pants, collars, or do cross chokes in nogi. When I'm training for major nogi events like ADCC I really need to focus completely on the assets I can exploit in a match. I don't want to reach for a pant leg and wish that it was there. I don't even want to think about it as an option so I leave the gi off. Right now I still train without the gi at least twice a week try to get better without it, but honestly my gi and nogi are way off.

"For me, to improve my nogi game to the level my gi game is I need to focus on fixing my weaknesses and finding a way to compensate for the absence of grips, which are such a huge factor in my gi game. Right after Worlds in 2013, for the first time in my life I didn't have a single roll with the gi on for about four months. I actually saw a huge improvement in my nogi game. I was like OK, 'I'm going to shift to only nogi when I'm prepping for nogi competition.'

"Honestly, my training in a way has been the same for the last 15 years. I train hard, I train every day at least twice a day. I still work on my fundamentals, and I tell my students to do the same, to try to have a clear head so that competing is fun. When this happens I know I'm gonna do well. When I put too much pressure on myself, and tell myself I have to win, then I usually don't do well. Going into 2013, I really paid attention to my own advice and tempered my own expectations. I was extremely focused, but at the same time I was so relaxed. I wanted to win my 4th world champion and second was ADCC, which is something I had wanted for such a long time, and I wanted to prove to myself and to the whole world that I could win ADCC.

"I had these two goals in my mind, this was what I wanted to accomplish. I told myself 'I'm gonna make it happen, I'm gonna be a world champion one more time and win ADCC', but I didn't let the end goal interfere with the process. I didn't overwhelm myself with pressure, and I remembered to have fun and stay relaxed. That's what happened, I won both in the same year and this was a nice way to celebrate my entire career because it was a special accomplishment. The thing though was I was having fun, which helped me relax and gain the extra confidence needed to accomplish my goal of winning the two most important jiu jitsu tournaments in the same year," said Barral.

2016 AND BEYOND

Romulo Barral could quit today and still be regarded as one of the best ever, but he wants to be THE best, not ONE of the best. "Rankings are a nice recognition for a career. I really don't look to be first or second, in my weight class, medium heavy, I want to be the one who win the most. I'm still competing, I feel really good in training and performing well. I'm looking for one more world title and I want to make history in this weight class. I want to be among the pound for pound top ten names, and have it be a result of years of hard work and make it a consensus that I belong there. I'm not really interested in rankings like the 2014-2016 IBJJF rankings; I want to cement my legacy, I want to make history, keep winning and make it hard for others to achieve what I have," said Barral.

He plans on continuing his winning ways and making it hard to argue where he stacks against his peers pound for pound. He's already won double gold at the European Open this year, and that is only the beginning. He noted, "For this year I plan to compete a lot. I'm at the point in my career where I'm developing black belts; I want to put these guys on the map. When that time comes that will be probably when I stop. Right now I'm still feeling good, I'm training well with younger guys who are new black belts, I'm doing well against the new generation. I still want to win another Pans, another Brazilian National, and another Worlds for sure. I want another title; that is my main goal for this year.

"I'm 33, I'll be 34 soon, but I feel 24, so I don't know when I'll stop. Life is full of surprises and you never know; I might change my focus one day, but as far as my feeling, I still feel like my power, my speed and technique are in their prime. I have accomplished a lot, but I feel good. This is what I love to do, I'm not trying to stop. I want to continue building my legacy along with my students, I don't have a reason to stop. I don't want to, so I see myself doing this for a while still."

A TOUCH OF DE BLASS

WORDS: PETER CARROLL PICTURES: MARK WARD

Tom De Blass told us about his gruelling sessions with Renzo Gracie and Ricardo Almeida as a white belt, how he felt he needed to compete in MMA, why he will never get back in the cage again, why Garry Tonon is on top of his game and how jiu jitsu can change everyone's life.

At just 33 years of age, Tom De Blass has already competed on some of the world's biggest stages that jiu jitsu and mixed martial arts have to offer. A Nogi world champion, a winner of the Pan American Games, a former UFC and Bellator competitor as well as being an inductee into the New Jersey Martial Arts Hall of Fame, De Blass could retire happily and still be remembered as a great in his field despite his young age. However, the Ocean County Brazilian Jiu Jitsu head coach's mission is far from over.

Celebrating 10 years since it's inception last month, OCBJJ's sprawling facility on Lacey Road in New Jersey is the physical manifestation of De Blass's unwavering persistence in martial arts. Having just finished his morning session on the gym's signature blue mats, I find it hard to believe when De Blass tells me that his original athletic goal was to become a successful long jumper.

"It's funny actually," he tells me. "I left track and field because my body was too beat up and then I found martial arts."

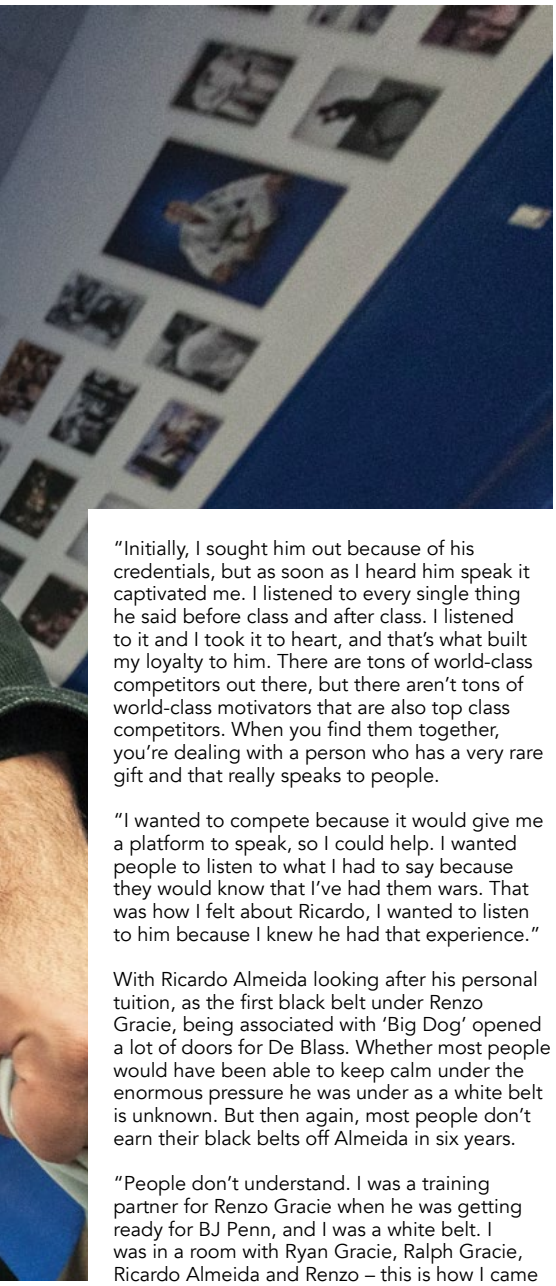
"I tore my ankle. I was much smaller back then because I was a long jumper, but when I got injured I just couldn't jump anymore. My ankle couldn't take it. I knew I still needed to compete because I needed something to help me handle my stress and aggression, and that's when I found jiu jitsu.

"I was one of the best long jumpers in the state in high school. When I went to college they had hopes of me being a 25-foot long jumper. Then I hurt myself and it just didn't work out that way."

De Blass tells me that he could dunk a basketball in his high school days. Of course, his natural physical ability coupled with his in-built determination that saw him rise to a high level in the track and field world would allow him to translate easily into a variety of different sports. That being said, to reach the level that he has in martial arts, there was another very important component that he had to nail down.

"I was so thankful that I found Ricardo Almeida, man. I wanted to find somebody that had done the things that I was hoping to do. Ricardo was very competitive when I found him. I used to drive an hour and a half each way to his academy four times a week, but it was all worth it to me. He had the experience that I needed. I'm really lucky that I met him.

"JIU JITSU IS EVERYWHERE. WE'RE FINALLY STARTING TO TOUCH THE OUTSIDE WORLD WITH SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET"



"Initially, I sought him out because of his credentials, but as soon as I heard him speak it captivated me. I listened to every single thing he said before class and after class. I listened to it and I took it to heart, and that's what built my loyalty to him. There are tons of world-class competitors out there, but there aren't tons of world-class motivators that are also top class competitors. When you find them together, you're dealing with a person who has a very rare gift and that really speaks to people.

"I wanted to compete because it would give me a platform to speak, so I could help. I wanted people to listen to what I had to say because they would know that I've had them wars. That was how I felt about Ricardo, I wanted to listen to him because I knew he had that experience."

With Ricardo Almeida looking after his personal tuition, as the first black belt under Renzo Gracie, being associated with 'Big Dog' opened a lot of doors for De Blass. Whether most people would have been able to keep calm under the enormous pressure he was under as a white belt is unknown. But then again, most people don't earn their black belts off Almeida in six years.

"People don't understand. I was a training partner for Renzo Gracie when he was getting ready for BJ Penn, and I was a white belt. I was in a room with Ryan Gracie, Ralph Gracie, Ricardo Almeida and Renzo – this is how I came up in the sport as a 20-year-old kid. Those kinds of things were expected of me.

"Everything seemed normal, you know? It's so funny, when I talk to guys like Garry Tonon and Gordan (Ryan), especially with Gordan because he's only 20 years old and all he knows is world class, anything other than world class to those guys is not normal. So when I was with Renzo, although I was so grateful for being in that position, I was used to being in those situations.

"Basically, if Ricardo asked me to do something, I was going to do it to the best of my ability no matter what it was. I wanted to please everyone and I wanted to do right by my team. In the end, I showed up enough to carve my mark. Eventually, I was able to make a mark on the whole scene, and that's something I'm really grateful for."

Taking a five-year exodus from competition jiu jitsu to pursue MMA, even though he managed to clock up a very respectable record of 9-2 and perform under the biggest promotional banners in the world, De Blass still sees his mixed martial arts career as something that he needed, rather than wanted, to do.

"It was a thing I needed to do, rather than something that I wanted to do. Ricardo had done it, Renzo had done it and since I was running my own school, I felt like I had to do it. I never liked doing MMA. Don't get me wrong, I like watching, but doing it didn't really appeal to me. I never loved it. I just did because I felt I had to.

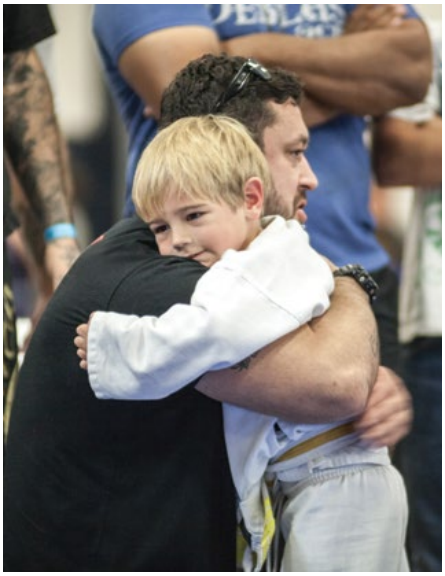
"I am glad I did it. The experience has been incredible and it definitely made me a better man. I was raised in a certain environment where I was surrounded by these legends – how was I not going to try and follow their path? It was a natural progression for me really. I did decent and I think my athleticism helped me a lot in MMA. I had the speed for it and I had the power for it. That certainly helped me a lot.

"After my last fight when I knocked a guy out, I found that I got no pleasure out of doing that kind of thing anymore. It's just not what I like to do. That part of my life, it came and went."

Since refocusing completely on grappling, De Blass is excited about the future of jiu jitsu due to the ever-growing professional platforms that are available to its athletes today. Where people used to only be able to see 'arte suave' performed in MMA bouts, they now get to see the full impact of the martial art through shows like EBI, Polaris, Metamoris and Copa Podio.

"As great as MMA has been for jiu jitsu, it kind of handicaps jiu jitsu too. In MMA, you can't see the pure art form of jiu jitsu. In MMA, you're looking at a very small portion of jiu jitsu. Now that sport jiu jitsu is really emerging, the game is evolving and we're seeing so much more new techniques being created. I hate when people put MMA next to jiu jitsu and think they're the same because they're completely different animals.

"It's a beautiful thing. I took five years away from jiu jitsu competition because of MMA and there wasn't a day that I didn't think about it. The athletes nowadays have so many options they don't even realise it. Jiu jitsu is everywhere. We're finally starting to touch the outside world with social media and the internet, and that has always been my goal.



"That's what is allowing the martial art to grow. Whether it's a funny meme or an unbelievable technique that's posted – that makes people from outside of the community aware of jiu jitsu. From there, some people will seek out ADCC, EBI and Polaris, or whatever competition it might be, but they want it in that exciting package."

What undoubtedly makes jiu jitsu's transition into a profession more exciting for De Blass is the fact that one of his most famed students, Garry Tonon, is carving through his competition to establish his own place at grappling's top table.

"I talk to Garry every day. He's just full of fire. He does most of his training in the city now with John Danaher, Gordan Ryan and Eddie Cummings and those guys, but we're actually going to start training next week ahead of his bout with Palhares. He needs some bigger guys ripping on his feet!

"PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND. I WAS A TRAINING PARTNER FOR RENZO GRACIE WHEN HE WAS GETTING READY FOR BJ PENN, AND I WAS A WHITE BELT"

"Every day I'm thankful that he walked through the doors of my academy. I really believe Garry would've been successful no matter where he went. Just training under me he won the Worlds twice, the Pan-American Games twice and the Abu Dhabi Trials, and now he's with John and he's bringing a whole new level of precision with the leg locks. Now, I'm learning from those guys and it's a beautiful thing.

"To see everyone hitting these levels just proves that when you come through these doors and you have goals to be a competitor, if you're willing to persevere through the hard work, you will accomplish your goal.

"Garry's fearless attitude and his willingness to compete against anyone is what I admire the most. Whether he wins, loses or draws, I'm going to love him regardless, but I think his attitude is something I helped to instill in him. I used to be in his head every day when he was 15, 16, 17 years of age, and I still am today, but I damn sure can't take credit for his success. I think he would have succeeded no matter where he trained."

With so many standout talents affiliated to Renzo Gracie at the moment, one can only imagine how high intensity their training sessions are. While De Blass confirms that, he says the team's Whatsapp messaging group is a lot more scary.

"There are some serious sessions on the mat, but the text message sessions are even more brutal, believe me. If our Whatsapp conversations ever got out to the public we would all be done! If people saw some of the things we said to each other they would think we were sworn enemies, but we have a lot of fun. It's a cool thing.

"Our training sessions are never nice. You probably saw the picture I posted of me cranking on Garry's foot. That wasn't a joke, man. That's how we go and that's how everyone goes in my academy that's a competitor. If you're not a competitor, we won't go that hard. But if you're a competitor, we go hard."

There is an undeniable positivity that flows from De Blass. After his young daughter requested that he never compete in MMA again, the 33-year-old seems completely content with his endless search for knowledge through the grappling arts. De Blass is certain that his children can learn a lot from the 'gentle art' too, and he is adamant that he will do everything in his power to teach them.

"I have a daughter and a son now. When I retired from MMA and went back to jiu jitsu, I was watching TV with my daughter one day. It just happened that MMA was on the TV and she said to me, 'Dad, I don't want you to do this.' That does something to you.

"She'll see me compete, she'll see me wrestle and she'll see me grapple. She trains herself, she's a little monster! But for her not to want me to do that, it was quite an emotional thing, really. To willingly put myself in danger when I have so much to lose now, that just wasn't worth it anymore.

"Before my kids I didn't care about life or death, that didn't matter to me. It really didn't. Now that I look back, that was such a foolish mindset. Why would I risk even one day away from my children that I love so much?"

"GARRY'S FEARLESS ATTITUDE AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO COMPETE AGAINST ANYONE IS WHAT I ADMIRE THE MOST"

"Jiu jitsu is life. I'm in my daughter's ear every day. Every time she cries I make sure she takes deep breaths, I calm her down and I stress the importance of being in control of your mind to her. For me, jiu jitsu can teach that to people.

"One of the most uncomfortable things in the world is when you're absolutely exhausted and someone mounts you and tries to impose their physical will on you, but perception is everything. If you're mounted by someone when you're exhausted and you think to yourself, 'Oh no, I'm so tired, I need to get out of here, I'm losing', you're going to panic.

"Instead, if you think 'this will eventually end, this is no problem', you're going to be ok. So many times, your cardio is actually affected by your mindset. Hard times can be dictated by your mind set too. You always have that choice in what way you look at things. You have to look at things the positive way and I think jiu jitsu really helps people in all walks of life become better and stronger in mind. That's what I want for my daughter, I want her to be mentally unbreakable."

Although De Blass still has some goals in terms of competition, his main focus is evoking change in the people that walk through the doors of Ocean County. Having seen peoples' lives change before his eyes, the New Jersey native is adamant that jiu jitsu is for everyone. He believes his role is to find how his beloved martial art can help change each individual's life in a unique way.

"I still want to do all of the big competitions, but my main focus is just helping people. I want to help to guide people with jiu jitsu. This martial art helps to relieve stress and allows you to become mentally and physically stronger. Through jiu jitsu you meet these guys who are unbreakable from the time they spent on the mats, and it can really create a lot of happiness in your life. I think that's very unique to jiu jitsu and it's something you can't really understand unless you've tried the sport.

"I feel like I fell into a lot of my accomplishments, but I do know that I have a very strong mindset for the competition. Right now, I don't want to be the best for me. I want to be the best because it will give me a platform to help other people become their best. Not everyone wants to be a competitor, but if I can help that guy who is stressed out and depressed and make him happy by the time he leaves my jiu jitsu class, that's makes me feel like I'm doing something. That makes all the blood, sweat and tears during competition worth it.

"I have about 300 students, but on any given day, even if all 300 bodies are on the mats, there are thousands of people driving by that aren't training yet. That just burns my ass," he laughs.

"There are so many more people we can help through jiu jitsu, we don't even realise it. So many people say, 'jiu jitsu is not for me', but no, it is for them. All they need to do is figure out how it is for them. It's just limitless, and I think it will continue to keep growing."

Tom De Blass training with one of his most famous students, Garry Tonon

BULL TERRIER
The Real Deal Aims
Mahamed Aly
Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu World Champion
(2013 brown weight & absolute, 2014 purple)
BULL TERRIER
The Real Deal Aims
Shoping site : www.b-j-j.com (日本語)
www.btfightgear.com (English)
www.bullterrier.co.jp

WORDS: OLIVER GEDDES

THE CONCEPT OF 'LINEAGE'

There are plenty of martial arts out there that emphasise the concept of 'lineage'.

My first martial art, Wing Chun Kung Fu, was hugely focused on the concept of who you had learned from and how directly connected they were to 'the source'. Wing Chun, however, is a martial art that doesn't have a standardised belting system so although lineage is important, grading is seen to be less so. Jiu jitsu is similar in the sense that there is generally a strong focus on being able to prove a connection to bigger names and organisations and thus ensuring that your belt is 'legitimate', however that is defined. Where it differs to most other martial arts is that every grading, and hence every belt, tends to be accompanied by the name of the instructor under whom you earned it.

For example, I will always be a Roger Gracie black belt, whether I am currently training under him or not. That is a connection which will always have huge weight, something that is proven by the fact that those are usually the next four words to follow (or sometimes precede) my name whenever I'm introduced within the community, either in print or in person. There are plenty of black belts out there who have been graded by one person, changed teams more than once, and then set up their own. Despite all this, the name of the man or woman who gave them their black belt will be attached to them for the rest of their career.

Things are slightly different, however, at the lower belts. Whilst you might be a Roger Gracie blue belt, if you were to get your purple belt under Lucio 'Lagarto' at Gracie Barra Knightsbridge, you would become a Gracie Barra purple belt, with the added complication of being 'a purple belt under Lagarto'. In this case, you would be able to change lineages and teams multiple times until you hit the black belt, at which point the person who graded you is set in stone, even though your affiliation is not.

In short, things are complicated, and there is a significant amount of personal responsibility that comes with knowing that any students you grade will carry your name for a long time, potentially forever. So taking that into account, you have to be totally sure that someone deserves one before even thinking about handing out any belts.

Many of the first belts that I gave out personally, I never considered 'mine' in that sense. I was asked at seminars or classes to award belts because I was senior to the instructor in the class and he wanted the belt to come from someone more highly ranked than himself. Obviously I wanted to be aware of their abilities to make sure they were up to the level required of the new belt, but that aside, I never considered them 'Oli Geddes blue belts'. As they continue to pass through the rankings, my name will likely be replaced by someone else's, and that's perfectly fine with me. I once awarded a brown belt to a long time training partner on behalf of Roger when it had to be done and he was out of the country. Despite the belt coming from me, he would consider himself a 'Roger Gracie brown belt', and that's how it should be.

The first belt that I would consider 'mine' went to one of my long-time private class students, yet by the same turn as above, I didn't award it myself.

Oli Geddes is a seasoned competitor, referee, globetrotter, half guard connoisseur and black belt under Roger Gracie

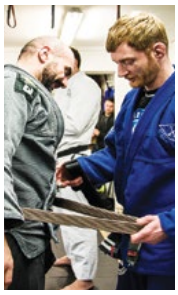
I passed it up the chain to one of the instructors at RGA, even though I considered him to be my own student more than the academy's. The first belts that I both awarded and considered my own were at a grading last year at an academy I teach at regularly in Cheshire. These were people I had trained with, taught, appraised and whose instructor considered me to be his instructor. I

> "WHERE BJJ DIFFERS TO MOST OTHER MARTIAL ARTS IS THAT EVERY GRADING, AND HENCE EVERY BELT, TENDS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE NAME OF THE INSTRUCTOR UNDER WHOM YOU EARNED IT.

even gave out two purple belts; belts that begin the transition into the 'senior ranks' of jiu jitsu and as such are rather more weighty things to give out than blue belts.

Even as I write this I am in a plane on the way to Moldova to an affiliate, and I have a number of blue belts in the bag by my feet that (unbeknownst to the students training there) I will be awarding to some of the students at the academy. These are people who have been training for many years in jiu jitsu in an environment where there simply were not enough senior belts to award anything, so three year white belts are fairly commonplace. Once again, they will wear my name alongside the name of their instructor and their academy and I am proud that they will do so.

To go from a world where I'd simply never given out a belt before to one where doing so is commonplace is relatively strange, but it's just another stage in one's progression through jiu jitsu, from student to senior student to instructor to professor.



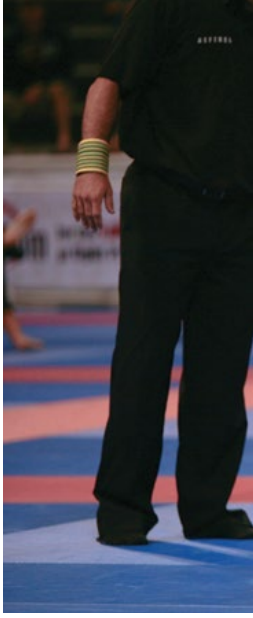
So what's the next milestone? That would be to take a student from the day he walks into the academy all the way through every belt. As it is right now, I can travel, I can do my best to give advice or guide students in their progression, taking into account what they already have learned and give them new directions to go in, but I'm not there on the mats with them every day. I travel too much, I visit too many different academies for that. One day, however, I'll have a place of my own and with that comes the responsibility of overseeing every student every day, making the small adjustments and watching them develop from session to session.

When I award that black belt, I will be entrusting that student, whoever they may be, with the same responsibility - to continue spreading the art, to recognise the abilities of others, and to maintain the standards that have been responsible for making jiu jitsu one of the most respected martial arts in the world. It's a long way off, but I'm looking forward to it already.

WWW.FAIXARUA.COM

FAIXARUA

89 RICHFORD STREET LONDON W6 7HJ



WORDS: BUDO JAKE

MY MOST MEMORABLE BJJ MATCHES FROM 2006-2015 (PART 1)

I've been closely involved with many of the top BJJ tournaments over the past 10 years. During that time I've seen a countless number of BJJ matches, some of which stand out more than others.

What I will attempt to do in this series is to draw your attention to a few matches from the past decade that I have fond memories of. For each match, there was something I learned. Alongside 99.9% of us who watch BJJ tournaments, I too am a practitioner and I watch matches not so much for entertainment but to learn something that I can take away and incorporate into my own training.

So please don't view this column as the "best matches of the past 10 years", they are simply the matches that have stuck with me. Hopefully the lessons I learned will have some value to you as well.

FLAVIO ALMEIDA VS EDUARDO TELLES
(2007 PAN AMERICAN JIU JITSU CHAMPIONSHIPS)
Flavio Almeida, brother of UFC vet Ricardo Almeida had just moved to So Cal from his native Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was a pretty strict guy with a loud voice. When he taught classes at Gracie Barra HQ, he reminded me of a drill sergeant. He would yell instructions and correct every little detail. Despite his rigidness though, he also had a calm and nice personality.

His opponent in this match was the Alliance black belt, Eduardo Telles. There could not be a more different personality style in this match up. Eduardo has what appears to the casual observer to be a "lazy style" of jiu jitsu. He freely turtles and gives up his back. His style goes against what many consider "the rules" of good jiu jitsu. The amazing thing is that Eduardo makes it work.

So here we had an aggressive beast of a passer (Flavio) fighting a playful guy, rolling around like a feline (Eduardo). After watching Flavio smashing everybody at the academy for a couple months I was curious to see how he would handle the unpredictable Telles.

The match was not the most exciting of matches, but it was a very technical one, particularly if you know how dominant Flavio usually is. In this match, he was very cautious with each grip and it's easy to see how Telles lulls his opponents into a false sense of security when he gives up his back. There is a lot to learn about how to stay safe from aggressive guard passers in this match.

THE RESULT: Telles won on points.
THE LESSON: It's possible to survive and win using good defensive movements, even when faced with an aggressive guard passer. It's not necessary to fight force with force.

Above: Andre Galvao vs Martin Suarez 2008 World Championships.

KRON GRACIE VS SERGIO MORAES
(2008 WORLD JIU JITSU CHAMPIONSHIPS)
If you were following the BJJ tournament scene in 2006-2007, you knew that Kron Gracie was one of the biggest draws. In 2006-2007 he was competing at the brown belt level and whenever his name was called to compete, a HUGE crowd would move over to his mat. No other brown belt got a reaction like that, and that response was well deserved as most of his matches were over in under a minute or two, with his opponents tapping to a wide range of submissions.

The 2008 World Championships was the first time that we saw see Kron compete as a black belt. All eyes were on the son of Rickson Gracie.

There was a rules meeting before the event where team leaders got to have a say in who would fight who in the opening rounds. From what I understand, Kron's manager chose not to have him fight one of the big names, but instead selected him to face the unknown (at the time) Sergio Moraes from Brazil.

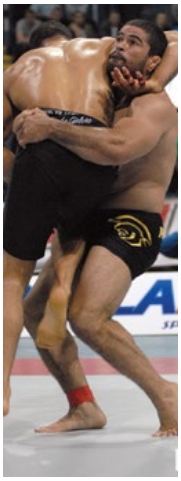
When the two athletes were called, the tension in the gymnasium was palpable. I remember how strange that was, as usually it doesn't feel like that until the finals. Here we were in the very first match for Kron. "How fast would Kron tap this dude out?" I remember thinking… "One minute, maybe two?"

This match was completely different to any of Kron's matches from previous years. Sergio was very well prepared: to put it simply, he had Kron's number. Guard passes, takedowns, Sergio had it all. Kron fought hard, but the confidence was clearly slipping away from the young Gracie. As his confidence left, so did his stamina. Sergio, on the other hand, seemed to get stronger and stronger as the match went on.

Rickson is usually not very expressive when he coaches his son, but his expression of anxiety was clear to me. When Sergio sunk the Ezekiel choke the noise from the crowd was deafening. We just couldn't believe it. How well one does at brown belt is often no indicator of how well he will do at black belt level.

THE RESULT: Sergio Moraes won by submission.
THE LESSON: The black belt division is a whole other world and just because you've never heard of a guy, it doesn't mean he can't beat you sometimes.

ANDRE GALVAO VS MARTIN SUAREZ
(2008 WORLD JIU JITSU CHAMPIONSHIPS)
Sometimes people complain that there's not enough action in the final matches of the World Championships. My response to that is: if action is



Above: Andre Galvao vs Rousimar Palhares at the 2011 ADCC.

Budo Jake is a black belt under Carlos Gracie Junior, CEO of Budo Videos and host of Rolled Up and This Week In BJJ.

Above:
Andre Galvao vs Martin Suarez 2008 World Championships.

Right:
Kron Gracie vs Sergio Moraes 2008 World Championships.

what you want, watch the opening rounds. That's where we often see some big disparities in skill level.

This was Andre's first match of the open weight class of the 2008 Worlds. Martin was an unknown on the world stage, but of course Andre was not.

Galvao seemed to be taking the match lightly in the beginning. He swept from the closed guard straight to the mount. Perhaps out of desperation, Martin went for what appeared to be a heel hook (although it's not quite clear from the camera angle) and this seemed to annoy Andre. This annoyance was just what Andre needed to go into fourth gear. Andre quickly passed Martin's guard and passed from side to side. Some have called it breakdancing. Galvao quickly wore his opponent out with his fluid passing, always staying one step ahead. It's hard to prepare for one of the best BJJ fighters of all time, but what this match made clear was the World Championships has that name for a reason; it's full of the best athletes in the sport.

THE RESULT: Galvao won by kimura.
THE LESSON: Don't p*** off Andre.

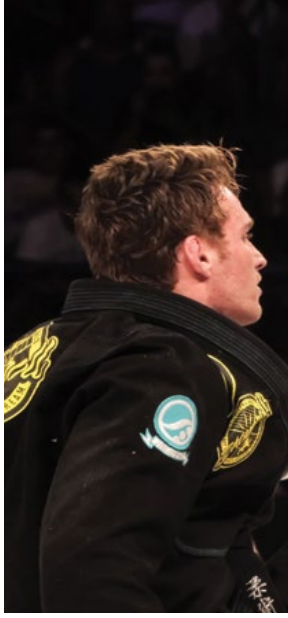
ANDRE GALVAO VS ROUSIMAR "TOQUINHO" PALHARES *(ADCC 2011)*
This was a matchup that many in the crowd were looking forward to. One of the best BJJ athletes ever versus a dangerous grappler known for his leg breaking and his habit of holding on to submissions longer than necessary. The difference in strength was clearly visible just by looking at them face off. Toquinho's size and strength was a handful for Andre.

The first three minutes were spent on their feet with Toquinho throwing in a few "neck slaps" for good measure. Once the match hit the ground, Toquinho (predictably) went right after the feet of Galvao. Heel hooks, kneebars, straight ankle locks – it was a master class of leg attacking transitions by one of the most dangerous grapplers. Despite launching good attacks, Andre showed great skill in escaping all of Palhares' submissions.

This match was not only a demonstration of great leg locking attacks and defence, but also a brilliant display of heart and determination from Andre.

THE RESULT: Galvao won on points.
THE LESSON: Know your leg lock defence. Even if you never become a good leg locker, you need to know some basic escapes. ■

Reverse Half Guard
Philipe Della Monica
In this first ever instructional set devoted to the Reverse Half Guard, Philipe shows how to get into the position, how to sweep, and how to get the submission. The Reverse Half Guard is a position that few BJJ practitioners are comfortable being in. Learn this guard and you will surprise a lot of your sparring partners!
Also Available
ON DEMAND
Now available in the iTunes
App Store
DVD VIDEO
日本語解説付
Available at
Budo videos
www.BUDOVIDEOS.com
/budo4life
@budovideos



WORDS: SAM JOSEPH
PICTURES: HYWEL TEAGUE

HOW BJJ MAKES US PROBLEM SOLVERS

There are many different reasons why those of us who practise Brazilian jiu jitsu value it; it is fun, provides great exercise and is the most effective hand-to-hand martial art in the world.

For me, the lessons BJJ offers that translate into our lives off the mat are what cement its place in my heart. One of the most useful lessons we learn and practise when we train consistently is how to be effective problem-solvers. In today's rapidly changing and challenge-filled world, whether we are considering social, political or workplace situations, problem solving skills are appreciated and in high demand. BJJ helps us develop problem solving skills and gives us a practice ground where we can sharpen those skills over time. Let us take a look at a few ways BJJ moulds us into problem solvers.

WE LEARN TO FIND STRENGTH IN "WEAK" POSITIONS

My eyes were first opened to the power of BJJ when I watched the legendary Royce Gracie win UFC 4. Back then, the UFC featured a tournament format with very few rules and Gracie fought Dan Severn in the final. Severn was a wrestler who had an 80lb weight advantage and, coming from a traditional martial arts background with a healthy respect for wrestling, I saw no way that Gracie could win. I thought the bigger wrestler would get on top and overwhelm Gracie for the win - as he did his first two opponents. When Royce Gracie finished Severn, while on his back, with what I would later discover was a triangle choke, I was shocked and completely sold on the idea of learning BJJ!

As jiu jitsu athletes, it is easy to think of the guard as a strong position. In our academies and at tournaments, many engagements begin with someone choosing to pull guard. When we take ourselves back to "pre-BJJ" mindsets, we can remember how foreign the idea that someone could have the advantage when fighting from their back really was to us. Through time on the mat, we have learned techniques and had experiences that have changed our view to the point that many of us consider being in the guard a position of strength. We see this often as new white belts start to mature and develop guard games. They go from fighting frantically to "play on top" in sparring to willingly pulling guard and working attacks from there.

This common evolutionary path is, at core, problem solving. We are taking what is first perceived as a weak or losing position and we develop the skills to make it a strong and winning position. The beauty of this is the dynamic nature of sparring and therefore the learning, processing and application thereof needed to have success. Every time we are pulling guard or attacking from the guard, we are actively participating in and getting better at problem solving in a fluid situation.

What hooked me when I watched Royce Gracie win UFC 4 was that he found victory from a position that I considered utterly hopeless and weak. Gracie had a problem that seemingly had no solution... he was on his back and up against a bigger, stronger and skilled opponent. When Royce Gracie ended the fight from that position, he effectively kick-started my personal belief that even the biggest problems have

Sam Joseph is a 2nd degree Black Belt in BJJ under the Yamasaki Academy. He was awarded his black belt in 2007 and has vast experience as a teacher, BJJ competitor and MMA fighter.

solutions. BJJ trains us to think this way and gives us a training ground to practise and hone those skills.

"WE ARE TAKING WHAT IS FIRST PERCEIVED AS A WEAK OR LOSING POSITION AND WE DEVELOP THE SKILLS TO MAKE IT A STRONG AND WINNING POSITION"

WE LEARN TO SELF-CORRECT

Another skill we sharpen on the mat is being able to self-correct. One of the key factors in how fast our BJJ games mature is how quickly we learn to take in information efficiently and apply new techniques and concepts. One of the things that attracts thoughtful people to BJJ is that it is so much more than just a series of "moves" or "techniques". While we learn those things, we quickly discover that they can be applied in a variety of combinations and with subtle differences that can depend on the specific situation. In each sparring session, we get instant feedback in the form of the results of what we have tried. If we want a different result, we have the opportunity to make changes and try again, but even when we have access to world-class instruction, our ability to understand this information and apply it in an ever-changing setting requires us to develop the capacity to self-correct.

Growth in this area not only enhances our BJJ games but also easily translates into many other aspects of our lives. We become individuals who can, and seek to, look at ourselves critically with the end in mind of making the necessary changes to produce desired results. When people with those characteristics are addressing problems, solutions inevitably appear.

BJJ TEACHES US THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "HARD" AND "WRONG"

Murilo Santana (Unity/Barbosa) is one of the best pressure guard passers in modern BJJ. Go to YouTube and you will find numerous examples of how he uses, in combination with fine footwork and an excellent use of angles, a grinding style to make life miserable for guard-players. When watching Murilo play his preferred game when on top, we see decisiveness, complete commitment and great skill. What we do not see is an "easy" process. In fact, his passing can often be described by one of my favorite academy sayings, "BJJ progress is more often measured in inches than in miles. When we learn to see the inches, we set ourselves up to make the big jumps we desire". In Murilo's case, he wins the position "inch by inch" and is rewarded by consistent positional domination.

Pressure passing is just one aspect of BJJ that teaches and reinforces the lesson that "hard" does not necessarily mean "wrong". The mat shows us that often the resistance we meet is just an indicator that we are in fact on the right path. We become practised at working through adversity towards an identified goal. It could even be said that BJJ schools us to welcome the tests that life brings us. In training, we are constantly presented with problems and questions, and in seeking the answers, we are only limited by our creativity, ambition and willingness to work. Working through these daily tests teaches us to cherish and trust our ability to find solutions in tough situations.

CONCLUSION

Being a problem solver is as much about attitude as it is about developing skills. Brazilian jiu jitsu training requires us to find answers to ever-changing puzzles and our progress is, to a great degree, determined by our ability to solve the riddles that a variety of partners and situations present. As we mature on the mat, we are also learning key life skills that will allow us to evaluate, adapt, evolve and find solutions in situations that others find challenging and even untenable. In this way, the benefits of BJJ reach a long way off the mat and into other important areas of our lives. See you on the mat!

VISITING RIO

RIO DE JANEIRO IS OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS THE SPIRITUAL HOME OF BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU. THOUGH BJJ HAS ITS ORIGINS THROUGHOUT BRAZIL - AND HAS NOW FOUND ITS WAY ACROSS THE GLOBE - RIO STILL REMAINS A HUB FOR ITS TRAINING, CULTURE AND COMPETITION. JIU JITSU HAS BEEN SHAPED BY THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE, WITH THEIR LOVE FOR LIFE AND SUAVE ATTITUDE, AND ALSO FORGED BY THE FIERCE COMPETITION WHICH WAS TYPICAL OF THE EARLY 'VALE TUDO' DAYS.

Countless BJJ legends call Rio home, and the city continues to produce amazing talent on the world scene. Jiu jitsu is in Rio's blood. For this reason it is the dream of many practitioners to buy a ticket and jet off to 'Cidade Maravilhosa' to soak up the BJJ culture to a backdrop of forests, mountains, beaches and scantily clad locals.

Whether you decide to stay for a week or a year, the Rio lifestyle is intoxicating. There are few better ways to spend a day than hard training, recovering with a cup of Acai and hitting the beach, then visiting one of the amazing restaurants and refuelling for the next day of bliss as a 'gringo' in Rio. Many people dream of spending their days between the mats and the beaches, all amongst the breathtaking scenery and amazing weather. If you're one of them, the following information will help make the wish a reality, allow you to make the most of your experience and arrive home safely with some knowledge, skills and good stories.

WHEN TO VISIT

Rio's 'high summer' season is over our winter, from December to February/March.The temperatures during this time average around 25-30C, but often hit over 40C. This time of the year also sees more rain, and you'll often catch some intimidating but awesome thunderstorms. This is also 'party' season, marked by two major events - 'Revellion' (New Year's Eve) centres around Copacabana, where one of the world's largest fireworks displays is held on the beach, with literally millions of people flooding Rio's south zone to celebrate. The other is the famous Carnival - the world's biggest - which runs for five days at the beginning of February. Around this time the atmosphere is one of constant celebration, though the jiu jitsu academies rarely let this interrupt their training schedule for more than a couple of days, if at all.

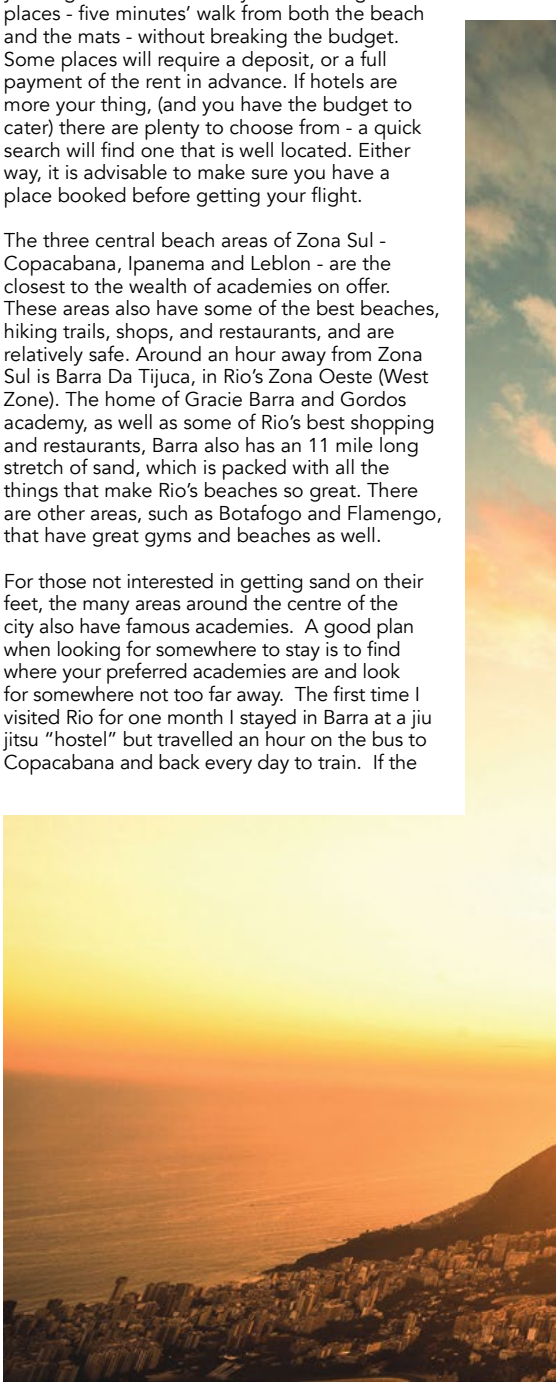
If you want a cooler, quieter, and cheaper time, the rest of the year is still full of Rio's typical idyllic weather and joyful character. The massive crowds aren't around, but the city and its beaches are still vibrant, and with no drastic drop in temperature the daytime averages above 20C, so it's certainly not what most people would call 'cold'. During this time Rio also experiences less rain, with the months of July and August having the lowest on average. Long story short, there really is no bad time to visit Rio; it's great all year round.

WHERE TO STAY

Before booking your flight it's a good idea to make sure accommodation is available. Depending on the time of year, the popular 'Zona Sul' (south zone) of Rio - where the best gyms and beaches are - can be fully booked in all but the more expensive places. This might lead you to decide to pick somewhere cheaper further out, but if you're new to Rio it might prove to be a hassle you could do without. A great way to find somewhere safe, cheap and close to the best academies is by using sites like Airbnb. Here you can rent out anything from a bed in a dorm to an entire apartment. You can select your location, amenities and price range, and even message the host with any information you might need. I have stayed in some great places - five minutes' walk from both the beach and the mats - without breaking the budget. Some places will require a deposit, or a full payment of the rent in advance. If hotels are more your thing, (and you have the budget to cater) there are plenty to choose from - a quick search will find one that is well located. Either way, it is advisable to make sure you have a place booked before getting your flight.

The three central beach areas of Zona Sul - Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon - are the closest to the wealth of academies on offer. These areas also have some of the best beaches, hiking trails, shops, and restaurants, and are relatively safe. Around an hour away from Zona Sul is Barra Da Tijuca, in Rio's Zona Oeste (West Zone). The home of Gracie Barra and Gordos academy, as well as some of Rio's best shopping and restaurants, Barra also has an 11 mile long stretch of sand, which is packed with all the things that make Rio's beaches so great. There are other areas, such as Botafogo and Flamengo, that have great gyms and beaches as well.

For those not interested in getting sand on their feet, the many areas around the centre of the city also have famous academies. A good plan when looking for somewhere to stay is to find where your preferred academies are and look for somewhere not too far away. The first time I visited Rio for one month I stayed in Barra at a jiu jitsu "hostel" but travelled an hour on the bus to Copacabana and back every day to train. If the



"MONTHLY MEMBERSHIPS ARE USUALLY AROUND 150 BRL (£30) BUT CAN BE AS HIGH AS 350 BRL (£70)"

traffic was bad (which it often is) it sometimes took nearly three hours. I figured out that over my month stay I spent a total of one and a half days on the bus. Moral of the story – location is key.

GETTING THERE

So, you've secured accommodation, now to book the flights! There are a number of flight comparison sites, such as Kayak or Skyscanner, where you can search for the best deals, lowest price first. One thing to bear in mind though, is that the cheapest flights aren't always the best. I once quickly booked a flight that was surprisingly cheap, only to find out it involved three changes, 13 hours of stop-overs and a nonsensical route from the UK to Rio. Needless to say, I would have paid an extra £30 to avoid that hassle and enjoy another two days in the city. You should be able to find a return flight from most UK airports for less than £700, but depending on the time of year it could be as low as £400. Sometimes booking directly with the airline can be the best idea, and makes it easier to change your booking should you need to. A bit of research and shopping around can make all the difference.

When you get to the airport, you will need to get a taxi to where you're staying. This will cost approximately £30, and it's best to approach a yellow taxi that has dropped off outside, rather than the expensive (and sometimes unlicensed) taxis that will approach you as you leave the airport.

STAYING A WHILE

How long should you go to Rio for? This question depends on a lot of things - not least your existing responsibilities, whether you've quit your job, and what your other half has to say about the possibility of you never coming back. Those things aside, it can take some time to become accustomed to the Rio way of life, settle into an academy and really begin to benefit. The last time I went I decided to stay for one year, and it was amazing. I have also been for one month, which was enough time to soak up the culture, get in the training zone, and come back somewhat tanned. Some people stay for a week or two, but I know someone who planned to go for six months, and stayed for six years. Plenty of people go and decide to live the Rio jiu jitsu lifestyle indefinitely; settling down and passing the years honing their skills and living the Brazilian way of life. The lure is definitely there.

Currently the visa situation for UK residents is three months on a tourist visa, with the possibility of an extension of three months or more - should you wish to tangle yourself in the spider's web of Brazilian bureaucracy. It is also possible to get work teaching English or to get a job in your field; foreign workers are in high demand in many sectors. If you happen to overstay your visa you will be fined, which you either pay upon leaving or when you next visit (at the time of writing that is the only consequence for first time over-staying, though I'm definitely not advising it; always best to go by the book). If you're considering staying longer, don't buy a one way flight - you might not be allowed in without a means of leaving, and most airlines will allow you to change dates for a fee when you're there.

LINGO FOR GRINGOS

It's not essential to become fluent in Portuguese before heading to Brazil, however it's worth noting that most people do not speak English - for example none of the police I spoke to when living there understood more than a handful of words. It can be difficult to ask directions, or order food if you don't speak the lingo. For that reason it's definitely advisable to get a

"Christ the Redeemer" statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, created by French sculptor Paul Landowski

Checkmat FightZone in Copacabana

"RIO'S 'HIGH SUMMER' SEASON IS OVER OUR WINTER, FROM DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY/ MARCH"

phrasebook and a free language app to wile away the hours on the plane and prepare yourself for your first visit to the gym, taxi journey, or order of Acai. You will definitely endear yourself to the locals if you at least try to speak the language rather than looking confused and pointing at things hoping for results (though this occasionally works).

FOOD

Rio has a wealth of different cuisines, from all-you-can-eat pizza places to organic vegan restaurants. Jiu jitsu isn't the only Japanese export to Rio though; there are a lot of great sushi places to enjoy, which are often reasonably priced and open until late. There is even a 'fast food' sushi chain known as Koni, such is Brazil's love of all things sushi. But Rio, like a lot of South America, it is a meat eater's paradise. There are "Churrascaria's", (restaurants that specialise in different cuts of meat) on most streets and you can get a heavyweight serving, along with sides, for a great price. If you plan to stay longer, spend less, and stay healthier, the many fresh produce markets around Rio will supply all the fruit, veg and meat you need to keep you lean and happy.

HITTING THE MATS

This is why you came, right? Well you're in luck. Thanks to the built up nature of Rio, you are never more than walking distance from world class mats, home to seemingly endless numbers of skilled people. Some academies speak varying levels of English, and some are better catered to foreign visitors, but you're never short of somewhere to train. Sessions run throughout the day - gyms are often running different sessions anywhere between 7am and 11pm.

Some people prefer to gym-hop, and check out as many places as possible, while others choose one place and stay there for the duration. Personally I think having one gym as a base, and visiting others from time to time, is the best option, especially when staying for longer periods. That way you can get to know the members better and get more attention from the coaches when they realise you aren't just a wandering gringo.

Prices vary between academies; some are twice the average monthly cost, often depending on their level of fame outside of Rio. Some gyms offer cheaper rates if you explain that you have moved there to learn full time. Whichever academy you visit, there is always a wealth of talent - when busy it's not unusual to share the mat with more than ten black belts, as well as plenty of other levels to roll and drill with. Training varies a lot between academies and a bit of research will go a long way towards getting what you need. One piece of advice - test the level of rolling before trying to prove yourself on the mat as rolling hard can magnify the target you may get on your back as a visitor.

Below is a list of some of the popular academies the different areas of the city have to offer - though this is by no means exhaustive as there are world class mats all around Rio, each with its own style and wealth of talent.

COPACABANA
Checkmat Fightzone
De La Riva (Equipe 1)
Fabricio Jiu Jitsu
Academia Strauch

IPANEMA
Academia Terere

LEBLON
Alliance
Brazilian Top Team

FLAMENGO
Nova Uniao (Academia Upper)

MEIER
GFT

HUMAITA
Gracie Humaita

BARRA DA TIJUCA
Gracie Barra
Gordos

RECREIO
X Gym

THINGS TO DO

In Rio you'll rarely be short of outings on your days away from training. Reading any guidebook will tell you of the popular spots - from Sugarloaf Mountain to Christ the Redeemer. You can go to central Rio to see some of the colonial buildings or museums, stroll through the old town of Santa Teresa, or sun yourself on the iconic beaches. You could also visit the Tijuca Tenis Clube, host to some historical BJJ competitions and still a major venue today.

Personally, I love the jungle trails which lead to the top of mountains, such as Pedra Da Gavea in Barra, Sugarloaf Mountain and 'Dois Irmaos' - the iconic 'two brothers' of the Ipanema skyline. After hours of sweltering forest trek and unrelenting uphill leg workout, the reward is stunning 360 degree views of the sprawling metropolis, jungles and beaches that make up the marvellous city of Rio. If you want a visit further afield, there are some amazing coastal towns and islands within two hours of the city. You can even book an affordable boat trip, including pick-up and drop off from where you are staying. If you're into sightseeing there's plenty to do but one of the best ways to experience the city is to sit and sip an ice cold beer or juice whilst watching the endless variety of people pass by.

RIO ON A BUDGET

Brazil as a country is quite cheap, but Rio is often far from it. While certain things can be found for a great price, such as food, costs of living are often comparable to UK cities. Currently

the exchange rate is favourable when changing sterling to reals; at the time of writing £1 is over 5 BRL. Below is an idea of daily costs but these will vary depending on the time of year, area, and how long you spend looking for the best deals. Any estimates in £ are based on the current exchange rate.

- ACCOMMODATION

These prices are an average, based on staying weekly and paying the full price - this can be reduced a lot when paying monthly. It's possible to find places outside of the price brackets below and it's a good idea to message the host to see what can be arranged. For private apartments the cost can be amazingly high, (the upmarket area of Leblon has some of the most expensive properties in South America) and it's common for apartments to go for thousands of pounds a night in peak season.

Bed in dorm: £5 - £15 per night
Private double room: £15 - £40 per night
Private apartment: £40 - £££ per night

- FOOD & DRINK

Here's an idea of some of the costs when eating out and about in Rio. The food markets offer better deals so if you want to cook at home you can often get a week's worth of fruit and veg for less than £20 and a dozen free range eggs for less than £2.

All you can eat meat & salad bar: £10 - £25 per person
Two person sushi platter: £10 - £20
Chicken/beef with rice, beans, chips and salad: £2 - £6
Large acai: £1.50 - £4
Fresh juice: £2 - £3
1 litre bottled water: under £1
Black coffee: under £1

- TRAINING

Monthly memberships are usually around 150 BRL (£30) but can be as high as 350 BRL (£70), depending on the team and location.
A daily drop-in fee is between £5 and £10.
A one to one session with a black belt can usually be arranged for under £20, less if you pay for a block up front.

There is a free outdoor gym at Arpoador, next to the far end of Ipanema beach. It has weights, pull-up and dipping bars made of paint cans and scaffolding; a world away from the chrome health clubs on offer in the city, but infinitely cheaper.

- TRAVEL

Bus/Metro - you pay the same however far you are going, around 70p to any stops around Rio.
Coach or boat trip (to other cities and sights) - around £30 will get you to some faraway places in case you want a holiday within a holiday!

X-Gym MMA academy in Receio

NIGHTLIFE

There always seems to be a 'nightlife' in Rio, with many people choosing to stay until the early hours drinking and eating on most evenings of the week. You can get some beers and snacks at a 'Boteco' (street bar) until the early hours and these are great places for catching the UFC events, football games, or performances by live musicians. If you really want to see the wild side of Rio's nightlife, get yourself to Lapa on a Friday or Saturday night where the edgy crowd will be rocking 'til sunrise and you can get a large 'Capirinha' - the iconic Brazilian cocktail - for as little as 10 reals (£2).

STAYING SAFE

I often get asked "is Rio safe?" The answer is complicated. There's no need to sugar-coat it, Rio certainly has a crime problem - from which no area is really spared. You will notice the heavy presence of military police in the popular areas, dissuading the often brazen groups of criminals.

Your safety depends a lot on common sense and exercising caution. The usual advice of keeping valuables out of sight (or preferably at home), not flashing cash, and staying near well-lit and well populated areas will save you a lot of problems. Quite often if you've wandered into the 'wrong neighbourhood' it becomes quickly apparent by your surroundings. To be safe, don't hang around in areas away from busy areas and watch out for groups of people following you.

Another consideration is when visiting the beaches. While it may be tempting to jump into the waves it's important to heed to warning about the tides - ignore the red 'no swimming' flags at your peril. Even the locals occasionally get into trouble being dragged out to sea by strong currents, and have to be rescued by the lifeguards dotted along the beach. (Embarrassingly, it happened to me once). Horror stories aside, I managed to live there for a year without a major issue and I didn't spend all day inside, so it's certainly doable.

CIDADE MARAVILHOSA

Rio is known as the 'Marvellous City' for a reason. The vibrant yet easy going culture, beautiful weather and amazing people make it one of the world's iconic cities. The contrast between the bustling metropolis, mountainous forests and seemingly endless coastline means there is always somewhere to go and something new to see.

Worries can be forgotten here, watches can be left at home. Rio runs at its own pace. This, plus a world class jiu jitsu scene that allows an unsurpassed level of immersion in the art, means the biggest risk with visiting Rio de Janeiro is that you may never want to leave.

Gracie Humaita academy in Humaita

Brazilian Top Team in Leblon

WORDS: MATT JARDINE
PICTURES: CALLUM MEDCRAFT

THE FITNESS BEHIND FIGHTING

What do Marcelo Garcia, Bernardo Faria, Caio Terra, Leandro Lo, an Italian therapist and 99.9% (unofficial stat!) of all BJJ'ers have in common?

They all have pretty definite opinions regarding the necessity, or not, of strength and conditioning programmes as adjuncts to regular training.

The hotness of this issue was wasted on me until an almighty changing-room war (friendly but heated) broke out one morning after class. It had never occurred to me that so many people had so many strong views about such an innocuous topic. But they do. Apparently.

There is very strong evidence to suggest that the interest in, and quality of, BJJ is increasing exponentially; one example is the year on year entry growth of competitors at the IBJJF European Championships. In 2014 competitor entries reached 2,300; 2015, 3,400; this year, 3,517.

As participation increases, and standards rise, exponents of our evolving art look for ever increasing ways to take their game to the next level. Consideration of strength and conditioning programmes seems then, inevitable.

BJJ is physically demanding. Ask any white belt bent double with their hands on their hips after class and they will attest to the same, and although it gets easier as our use of leverage over power matures, it is still an undeniably effort filled pastime. Surely being 'fitter' would help us along the way?

In this article we will look at several camps of thought: BJJ athletes who think an extra S&C programme is necessary, those that don't, those that believe in modification and the thoughts and views of an expert therapist dedicated to working with athletes and martial artists.

CAMP 'CROSS-FIT'

One of my early instructors would often rush out of the academy after class so that he could make it across town for his cross-fit class. He swore by it, he really did.

There is no doubt that many top athletes believe in, and are committed to, supplementary S&C programmes. One of the defences during the changing room 'brawl' was, 'Just look at pro sports bro, they all have S&C programmes - you can't be any good without fitness man…' It is an almost unwritten law.

The top five reasons cited by health and fitness 'experts' regarding the need for such programmes are:

- Avoidance of injury
- All round body strength
- Improved technique
- Increase of power
- To become a better athlete

All seems reasonable enough, right? Scratch the surface, though, and you may find that all is not quite as clear-cut as it first appears. The unquestioned may need to be questioned.

Much of the support for S&C is from websites and companies specialising in offering their services and tuition in strength, fitness and conditioning - businesses that have a vested interest in supporting the fitness industry; an industry that makes its money selling new concepts (remember the proliferation of fitness fads over the years: Step Aerobics, Zumba, Tae Bo, 8-Minute Abs and Thigh Master?).

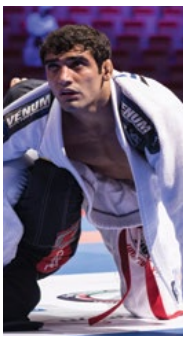
This, coupled with our human tendency to ignore what is often plainly staring us in the face (see 'The Invisible Gorilla' experiment- www.theinvisiblegorilla.com), may mean that passionate athletes, too busy trying to improve their art to fully consider the importance of what is on offer, are prematurely placing their faith in the fitness industry's promises of a 'brighter tomorrow'.

As an example of the way we often take hearsay as 'truth', let's consider three commonly held beliefs that are actually proven myths and falsities:

1. Fresh vegetables are better than frozen
Despite the belief that fresh produce beats frozen, research has shown that freshly picked fruit and veg begin to lose nutrients immediately whilst immediately frozen ones retain them.

2. We only use 10% of our potential brainpower
I actually attended a workshop with the man who instigated this most commonly shared myth. It was originally quoted as an experiment to ascertain the Internet's ability to have users share, and consequently believe, absolute nonsense!

3. Carbohydrates make you gain weight
Jean Harvey-Berino, head of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont, says that, 'There is nothing inherently fattening about carbohydrates. Complex carbs in



Caio Terra, Leandro Lo and Marcelo Garcia are all known as highly successful black belt world champions that do supplementary strength training.

grains, fruits and vegetables provide energy to the body and thus are very important. The carbs to be avoided are the simple or refined ones present in foods made of white flour or with high sugar content.'

LEARNING TO WALK

This article is not intended to denigrate the health and fitness industry; it serves us well on many levels but experienced opinions and simple truths cannot be ignored. After all, when learning to walk, does a toddler have to lift weights in preparation for the musculature needed to remain upright through its first steps?

And can we afford to ignore the thoughts of one of the greatest exponents of jiu jitsu of all time, Marcelo Garcia?

'I came to the conclusion through my own experience that if you want to be good at jiu jitsu you need to train jiu jitsu as much as you can,' Garcia is famously reported to have said. 'For a long time, I would follow whatever people told me to do. Once a guy told me to avoid hot showers and I spent two years taking cold ones,' he continues. 'Then, with time, I noticed that the only thing I needed to do was to train more and more.

'The last time I did physical conditioning before a tournament was at the 2003 ADCC. After I won that one, I knew it was not because of the physical part, but because of how much jiu jitsu I trained.

'There's a limit to how strong you can be or how fast you can move. With jiu jitsu, on the other hand, there's no limit. So, why are you going to waste time with other things when you could be developing your technique further?'

Another advocate of the 'get better at jiu jitsu by doing jiu jitsu' concept is Caio Terra. In an interview with BJJ Eastern Europe he had this to say when asked if he lifted weights:

'I do not lift weights…I believe that strength and conditioning has great benefits but it shouldn't interfere with jiu jitsu. For example, if you had 2 hours a day to train you should train 2 hours of jiu jitsu.'

When then asked if he believed that someone can become BJJ World Champion without any specific strength and conditioning he replied: 'Yes, I do think that! Leandro Lo does very little strength and conditioning and is also a world champ. Technique above everything is what wins championships, not how athletic someone is.'

THOSE THAT 'KNOW'

Whilst the opinions of these two greats cannot be overstated, or indeed ignored, their perspective comes from the highest level of BJJ; a level that most of us could never dream of reaching.

So, I reached out to a professional therapist who could offer a more objective view of S&C training. Alessandro Saba is an Italian with over 17 years of experience working with patients, clients, martial artists and athletes. He has enjoyed a rich and varied history within the combat arts including both striking and grappling and is well placed to understand the physical needs of BJJ exponents.

When asked to define his therapy modality, he paused in much the same way BJJ players do when asked, 'What is your game?' Indefinable as one thing, he decided upon an explanation he thinks will make sense to laymen and women: 'If you want to put a name on what I do, you can call it myofascial manipulation for structural balance.' (I'm glad I asked!)

After being asked his thoughts regarding the importance of S&C for BJJ athletes, Saba's priority was its helpful use in the prevention of injury for beginners, who often arrive on academy mats after relatively sedentary lives:

'Most who do BJJ are not high level athletes like Marcelo Garcia and Caio Terra, who are very aware of their body already and can just concentrate on their

technique,' he says. 'Many people who do BJJ are living normal lives with usual jobs - often sitting at desks - and this leads to a couple of major problems. The first is adrenalin; we are not designed to deal with adrenalin sitting still, we are meant to utilise it. When adrenalin flows in the workplace, there is nowhere for it to go - to get 'used up'- and the tension has major muscular skeletal consequences for our bodies.

'The second is asymmetric body balance - the most essential thing is symmetrical balance of the body,' he says emphatically.

'Much of BJJ is taught one-sided and so asymmetrical imbalance is often compounded, leading to one sided weakness that can then lead to overstrain and weakness of the non-dominant side. Experienced and 'body aware' athletes can work around this, but inexperienced athletes mostly cannot; injuries will happen, and previous injury is the main reason for future injury, so the cycle continues and the athlete eventually leaves the sport through the disillusionment of pain.'

RESISTED JIU JITSU

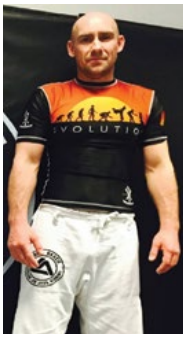
With the importance of S&C for newcomer injury prevention established, I steered Saba (no mean feat when dealing with an Italian passionate about what he does) to the question of S&C's use for other, more experienced, demographics:

'Of course, everyone wants an advantage over their opponent. I though, would focus on movement and flexibility rather than just strength. It is why [in MMA] we are seeing people turn to the likes of Ido Portal and yoga to supplement their training. In an ideal world, this sort of work would be structured and integrated into the BJJ class itself, as we are all short of the time needed for extra fitness work.'

Toward this methodology of training, in a recent podcast, double gold medalist at the 2015 Mundials, Bernardo Faria, explained how one important phase of his S&C programme involved his favourite jiu jitsu techniques performed against the resistance created by his trainer (with either elastic bands, weights, heavier opponents etc.) In this way, following Saba's reasoning, symmetry could be guaranteed by the intelligent intervention of the trainer's resistance placed to the athlete's weaker side, whilst the actual muscles used in jiu jitsu could be developed by doing, well, actual jiu jitsu. Now there's a thought!

Like all things, S&C is not as clear-cut as you would initially imagine: as a rainbow is made up of different colours, so too are people's opinions and approaches to the integration of fitness into their jits training. Ultimately, such diversity in approach demonstrates that there are many routes to the top of a mountain, as long as each method is considered mindfully before our commitment to it.

But one thing is certain, if training ever gets a bit dull, and you have the courage to 'spice it up a little', just whisper that 'weight training is for people who aren't clever enough to work technique' into the ear of the guy or girl with the biggest neck, and watch the day transform!



Matt Jardine is a full time teacher of the Martial Arts, writer and author. He is currently on the run from a man with a 42-inch neck after whispering in his ear.

In this rendition of Masterclass, Gianni demonstrates some of his favourite guard passes alongside fellow Marcelo Garcia student, Erin Herle.

MASTERCLASS

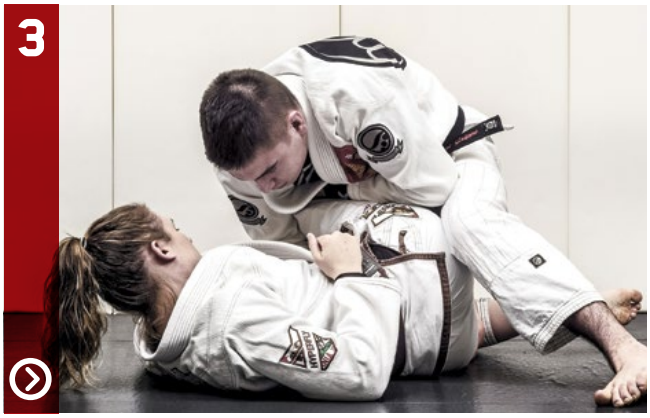
GIANNI GRIPPO

Gianni Grippo is a multiple Pan Am Champion, World Champion and one of the most talented American black belts on the competition circuit. Training in New York under Marcelo Garcia, Grippo is known for his excellent use of the de la Riva guard and leg drag passing.

Pictures: Ric Ricard

1: From reverse de la Riva, grip the outside of your opponent's hooking leg, and on the far side control near their belt to restrict hip movement and the possibility of the lasso.

2: When knee cutting make sure you cut to the side, circling your knee around their shin to stay tight. Maintain your grip and begin to start pushing with your left hand across your body – your actual body will soon follow.



3: Maintain the same grips until you drive your right knee to the mat. Next, immediately drop your weight to restrict hip movement.

4: Before making your way to the side mount, cup their bicep on the side you're passing to as a pit stop. This keeps their shoulders on the mat and prevents them from turning to give the back.

5: From the bicep, go under their head and control the far shoulder - this is all before you shift your hips to the side.

6: As you now walk to the side, keep your hips elevated. Your knee from the initial leg drag stays in contact with their hip so they can't turn towards you.

7: Place your opposite knee and right hand on the mat (next to their hip closest to you) to complete the pass and continue to restrict hip movement.

TECHNIQUE 2

1: With the lasso, look to pull your right elbow towards your hip to relieve tension from the hook.

2: After pulling your elbow back, circle your right hand to the outside and make a grip on the outside of their knee. At this point you have outside control of both of their knees.

3: During the pull and circling of your arm to beat the lasso, your goal is to lift their shoulders slightly off the mat, and as soon as that happens you can back-step and get an underhook on their head, taking a grip on their far shoulder.

4: Close the gap, bringing your left knee to their hip to prevent them from facing you. Continue to keep the cross face, controlling the far shoulder.

5: To establish the position, place your hand and knee next to their hip closest to you to prevent further movement.

1: From reverse de la Riva, grip the outside of your opponent's hooking leg and on the far side control near their belt to restrict hip movement and the possibility of the lasso.

2: Continue to go through with the knee-cut below their knee, with the aim of going to the leg drag on the far side.

3: Instead of driving your right knee all the way to the mat for the leg drag, stop halfway in a squatted position, allowing your opponent to make their counter and swing their left leg around to create space and avoid the drag in the next step.

4: With both hands, grab the leg that they swing to counter with and post it in front of you, palms facing forward.

5: Now you can drop your left knee to the mat in between their legs and immediately look to close the gap, getting an underhook on their head with your left arm and making a grip on their far shoulder. Alternatively you can control their head and arm by clasping your hands.

6: Replace your left knee with your right knee and establish the reverse leg drag position.

7: To create space between their chest and knee, bring your knee in between and drive the knee towards their hip to make contact.

8: Finally, with the right leg you can step over into the full mount. Keep your knees pinched and toes as close together as possible to restrict their hip movement.

1: Start by controlling the outside of your opponent's knee and keep your right hand by their side, using your forearm to restrict their hip movement.

2: As they spin for 'kiss of the dragon' keep your weight back and grab the calf of their swinging leg to slow down the spin.

3: Extend your right leg (that was inside the de la Riva) and with your left hand pin their leg to the mat, completely nullifying their inversion and not allowing them to get underneath. Also grab the back of their pants, bringing their hip up off the mat.

4: With the same grips, shuffle yourself towards their side. Your left knee and shin is placed behind their knee closest to you, and your right knee is placed by their hips.

5: Pull them towards you and establish a leg drag, controlling their collar; your right hand stays on their pants, keeping their hips slightly elevated.

6: Before going to the side, establish an underhook on their head and control their far shoulder.

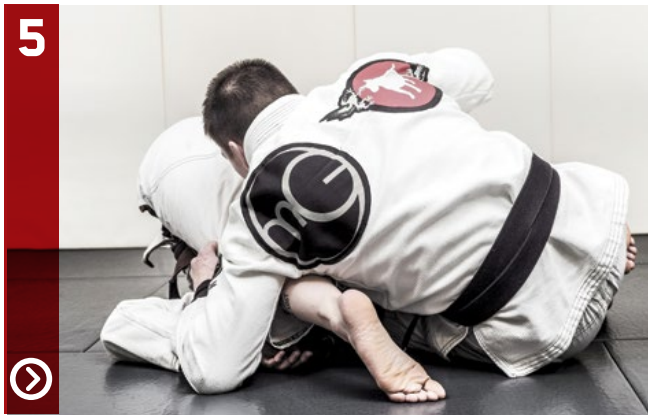
7: Back-step, keeping your right knee near their hip to keep them from turning towards you.

8: Complete the pass by continuing to control their hip with your left knee and left hand on the mat, next to their hip.

1: Your opponent is looking to spin underneath with a 'kiss of the dragon' as you post on one hand and one knee.

2: As they go inverted, drop your hip to the mat and place your knee next to their head, stopping their spin. To pin your opponent, bring your armpit over their far leg.

3/4/5: Extend your right leg to help further pin them, hooking the leg to the mat and allowing you to step your left foot over their calf in a set up for the leg drag. At the same time, your right hand is grabbing their pants to help pull you up to face them in the drag.



6: In the leg drag, switch your left hand to their collar and keep your head hovering over their chest.

7: Switch to an underhook on their head before you back step and begin the pass.

8: Once you've established side control, your left hand and knee stay tight to their hip and you maintain your crossface position with your right arm.

BRAULIO ESTIMA

ASK THE DOCTOR

Braulio Estima is Jiu Jitsu Style's resident BJJ Doctor, helping prescribe our readers just the right tonic of tips to improve their grappling game.

Send your questions for Braulio to u2us@bjjstyle.com and we will publish as many as possible in the next issue of *Jiu Jitsu Style*.

Hi Braulio,
What are your thoughts on training your 'bad' side? I've heard mixed viewpoints on this subject from people I train with and also top teachers. Do you force yourself to pass to your weaker side and play guard from your weaker side regularly? Or, do you take the stance that you should master one side as best you can before worrying about your weaker side?

Many thanks! - Karl

Hi Karl
It's a tricky question actually. Obviously if you are strong on both sides, it gives you a very strong advantage going into a fight with someone who is not, so theoretically speaking that would be the best idea. However, practically speaking, it's very hard to get really good on both sides in a certain space of time. Think about how long it took you to learn to write well, so how much longer do you think it would have taken to get really good at it if you split that time learning between writing with your right hand and your left hand?

For me personally I focused much more on my good side over the years, and I sort of treat that as building my 'base' for my jiu jitsu. Building up one solid side did enable me to explore my bad side more freely, knowing I could lean on my good side when I needed to. I would also say that your training partners can often dictate how you approach techniques and which side you work from. For example, if you have a guy who always likes to pass with their left foot forward, you will end up developing parts of your game on that side as well. This is another reason why versatility of training partners is very important.

I think if you really want to be good on both sides, specific training is a great way to improve on this in a focused way. At the end of the day though Karl, it's all an issue of time. If you have the time to work on both sides, and you're not concerned about developing your 'A' game as quickly as you possibly can, then train both sides equally. If you compete and need to develop a good competition game as quickly as possible, you will tend to spend more time training your good side.

Hi Braulio,
There were plenty of breakthrough fighters at the black belt level in Lisbon this year, such as Yago de Souza, who looked awesome at middleweight. I know you were in attendance at the Euros, so I wanted to ask you who you think are the most exciting young athletes coming through at black belt level right now, and if there were any big changes in the general style of jiu jitsu you've seen recently?

Cheers - Mike

Hi Mike,
It's always an interesting jump when guys go from brown belt to black belt at competition, as you instantly enter a division where people could have literally 10 years of experience over you. I believe the Euros were Yago de Souza's first tournament as a black belt, so that shows the level of achievement for him. Even though he didn't have to fight the highest level guys out there in the middleweight division he did an amazing job. Guys like Yago and Erberth Santos are very exciting fighters, I agree, and one of the things I've really noticed about these guys is that there is a heightened emphasis on being athletic.

The new generation of fighters are probably much more well-rounded than fighters used to be, and they are definitely more athletic. I also think we are seeing less specific styles at competitions nowadays. Guys have got used to dealing with the berimbolo and 50/50 guard - stuff like that - so the cycle is moving on once again. I remember when spider guard and de la Riva guard were the new techniques people were struggling with, but every style of fighting seems to have its cycle. I remember Jacare all of a sudden just smashing people's spider guards or half guards, and I believe the fighters coming through now are doing this with the more modern jiu jitsu positions.

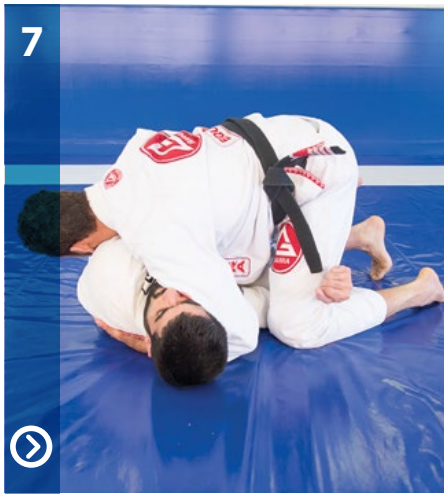
Half Guard Underhook Control Counter

Hi Braulio,
How do you go about dealing with a situation like being caught in someone's half guard and they have gained an underhook? There's a guy at my gym (mentioning no names) who is so good at this – he must be Lucas Leite's number one fan! He will get the underhook, come to his knees and bully me over. Any advice on how to deal with that underhook once it's there, or preventing it, would be great.

- Paddy

Hi Paddy,
That can be tricky. Prevention is always best, so here's my take on how to prevent your opponent getting to the underhook position from half guard.

1: Your opponent is in half guard and has a deep underhook with their left arm. This can be a dangerous position for you to deal with. 2/3: First, circle your right hand under their left leg and rest it on top of their right thigh to start creating a frame. 4/5: Control your opponent's head with your left hand on their collar. Drop your hips backwards and lower your base to prevent them from getting a deeper grip and moving underneath you. 6: Now you've neutralised the underhook, cross your feet and drop your weight on top of your opponent's shoulder. 7/8: When you're in control of the situation, switch your left hand to apply shoulder pressure on your opponent's neck and switch your hips. You have now moved from being in a defensive position to starting your own attack and looking to pass guard.

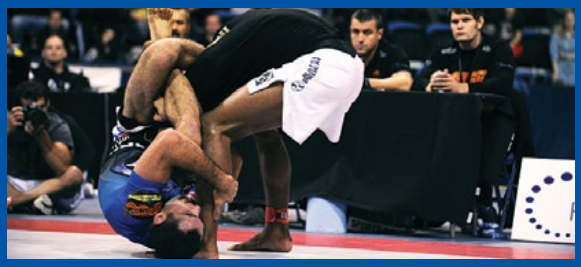


Dear Braulio,
Broad question, but I've a very similar body type to you (tall and lean) so I wanted to ask if there are any positions/ techniques that ultimately just don't work for you? I've only just got my blue belt, and my time on the mat is a little limited, so I want to make the most of my training and make sure I don't waste too much time trying stuff that's never going to work for me.

Best wishes - *Claudio*

Hey Claudio
I don't believe there are techniques that don't work. Even if you think a technique won't work for you, by gaining an understanding of the technique you can make something that WILL work for you. That's my belief. There are techniques that are not my highest percentage movements, but I've seen guys that are the same body type as me that can use them very effectively because they've made adaptations and found a way to make it fit.

This is a little bit like Karl's question about having a weaker side – you will have your 'A game', but you need to have an understanding of as much as you possibly can. Essentially it is all about trial and error. If you put time and emphasis on a specific technique for a length of time you will make improvements and figure out what works for you. For example, I can use the rubber guard, but not in the way that Eddie Bravo does it. I don't have great knee flexibility, so I tried to understand what made that position work for Eddie Bravo to then take away the parts that I could fit in to my own game. So try to see techniques or positions more as opportunities to explore concepts that can always be beneficial for your jiu jitsu.



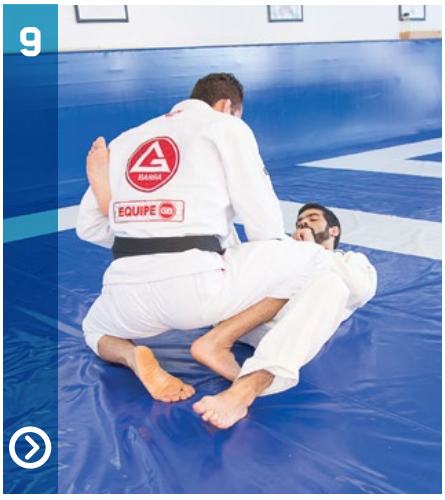
Wristlock From The Mount

Hi Braulio,
Do you like to use wristlocks at all? I know some people call them cheap, but I really want to learn a few sneaky ones to have in the locker for emergencies. A few options would be great.

Thanks - *Drew*

Hi Drew,
This is probably my favourite wristlock at the moment; I catch it a lot when in mount.

1: You are in the mount position and have already isolated your opponent's right arm. 2/3: Walk your right hand up towards your opponent's head, applying pressure at their elbow and forcing their arm to move. 4: Once you have their arm above their head, grip their left hand with your right hand. 5/6: Flex their wrist backwards with both of your hands and bring your chest and all your weight on top of them to get the tap.



Single Leg X-Guard to X-Guard Sweep Transition

Hey Braulio,
I've just about got my head around reaching the single leg x-guard position, but other than lifting my hips and bumping the guy to the mat for a footlock, I don't have many attacks... any suggestions? Any sweep transitions?

Thanks - *Claire*

Hi Claire
Have a look at this option when transitioning into a regular x-guard position.

1: You have reached the single leg x-guard. 2/3: Control your opponent's lapel with your right hand and bring your knees to your chest to shift their weight forwards, forcing them to step with their left foot. 4: Grip their left trouser leg with your right hand. 5/6/7: Switch your left leg position so you reach a conventional x-guard. 8/9: Lift your hips off the mat to off- balance your opponent and arrive on top for the sweep.

Inside this issue of *Shedding the Gi*, Jude showcases some of his favourite submissions and sweeps suited to nogi – enjoy!

SHEDDING THE GI

JUDE SAMUEL

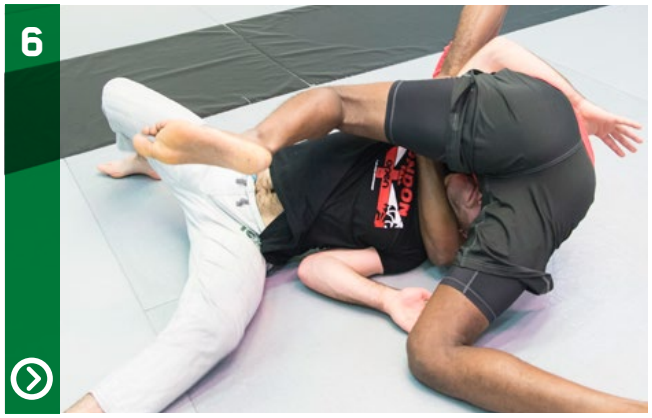
Sharing some of his nogi secrets inside this instalment of Shedding the Gi is one of the UK's first black belts, Jude Samuel! Jude has been a black belt for 10 years and is one of the most respected jiu jitsu practitioners in the UK. He is also the Head of Talent for the British Association of Mixed Martial Arts.

Pictures: Callum Medcraft

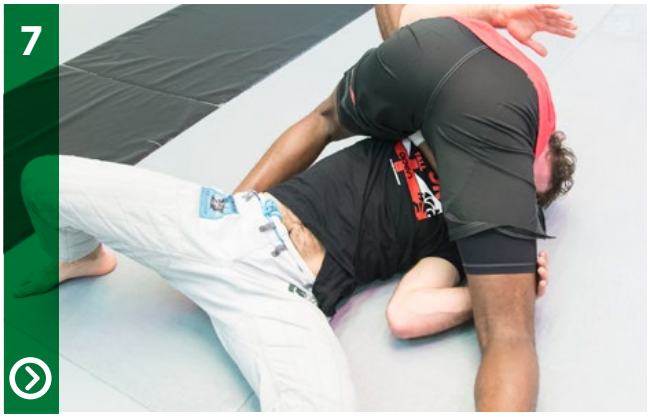
1/2: You are in a seated position and your opponent starts to move forwards, looking to control your hips. As they engage, underhook their neck with your right hand, as if you are looking to start a guillotine choke.

3: Connect your hands together underneath your opponent's right armpit.

4/5: Fall back on your right elbow, at the same time elevate your opponent's right leg with your left hook to roll them onto their back.



6: Continue to rotate until both your knees are on the back of your opponent's thighs and grip their hips with your hands.



7/8: Step over into a fully mounted position, maintaining your grips and driving your hips forward to finish the neck crank.

ARM DRAG TO BACK TAKE

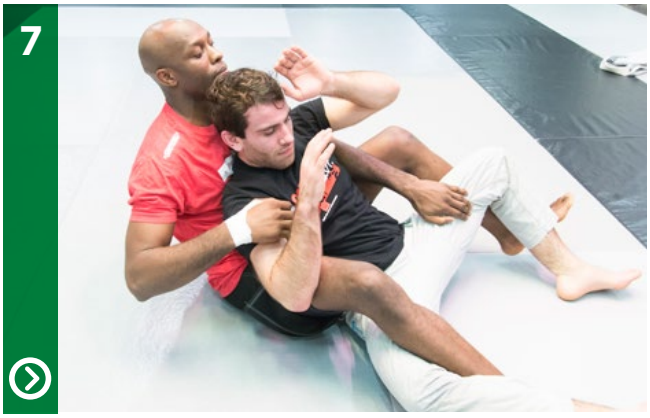
1: From a seated position, control your opponent's right arm at the elbow with your left hand.

2/3: Next, control your opponent's right wrist with your right hand, pull their arm towards you whilst moving your body forwards to close the distance between your chests.

4: Continue pulling your opponent forwards and switch your right hand to your opponent's right tricep, bringing your chest down across the back of their shoulder.

5: Start transitioning towards your opponent's back and slide your right hook into position.

6: Drag your opponent towards you and lace your legs (as pictured) to prevent an escape.



7/8: Continue rolling to your left, insert your second hook and secure a rear naked choke.

1: Your opponent has turtled and you are in a dominant position with control of their right forearm.

2/3/4: Use your left hand to move your opponent's left hand away from their body before trapping it with your left foot.

5/6: With your opponent's left arm trapped, you are free to attack with a short choke or rear naked choke.

1/2: From a seated position, shuffle forwards and gain an underhook with your right arm.

3/4: As you sit backwards, bring your left arm underneath your opponent's right thigh. It is important that you maintain a butterfly hook with your right leg.

5: Connect your hands behind your opponent's back.

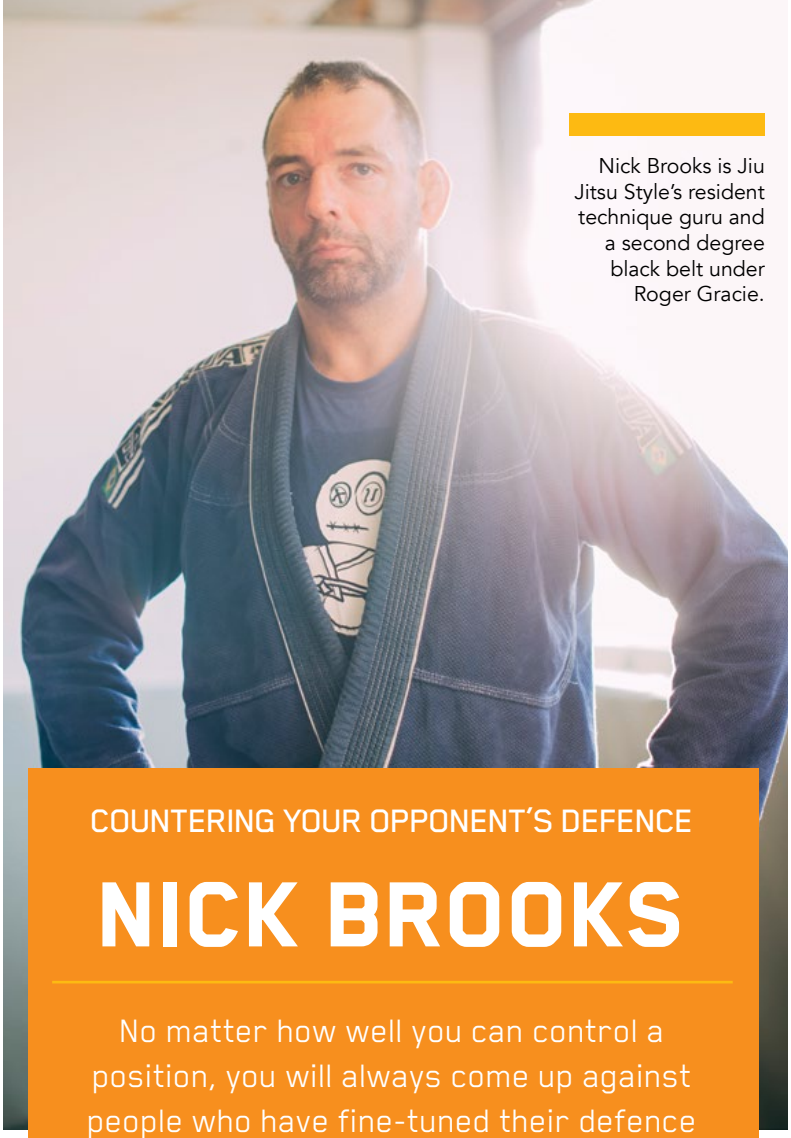
6: Using your butterfly hook to help, move towards your right and start to extend your right leg, creating space.

7/8: As you extend your legs, you will arrive in an x-guard position. Make sure to keep your right hand on the back of your opponent's right tricep to make sure they cannot turn to face you.

9: Underhook your opponent's left ankle with your right hand.

10: Lift your hips off the floor to rock your opponent's base and send them down to the mat.

11/12: Switch your base, drive your right knee across your opponent's left thigh and start to pass.



Nick Brooks is Jiu Jitsu Style's resident technique guru and a second degree black belt under Roger Gracie.

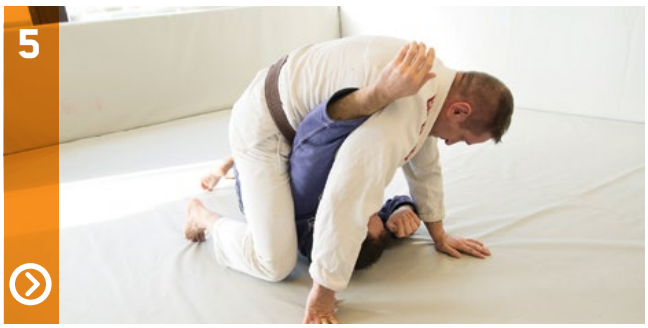
COUNTERING YOUR OPPONENT'S DEFENCE

NICK BROOKS

No matter how well you can control a position, you will always come up against people who have fine-tuned their defence to an extremely high level. Sometimes the best attack is to just 'go with it' and counter these defensive moves. Here are some of my favourite counters!

1: You have established side control, but your opponent is starting to make their escape.

2/3: Your opponent bridges and passes their arm under your right armpit to start escaping and turning towards their knees.



4/5: Start your counter by sliding your right knee across your opponent's chest to start putting them flat again.

6/7: In a flowing motion, pivot off your opponent's chest, arriving on the other side having secured an armlock.

1: You have established side control, but your opponent is starting to make their escape.

2/3: Your opponent bridges and passes their arm under your right armpit to start escaping and turning towards you.

4: It is common that your opponent will grip low on your right knee in an attempt to bundle you on to your back.

5/6: As your opponent grabs low on your leg, back step over them so that you are sat on their shoulder, catching their arm on the way. Timing is crucial here.

7/8: With their arm now secured, sit back and finish the submission.

1: You have established side control, but your opponent is starting to make their escape.

2: Your opponent passes their right arm under your body in an attempt to set up an escape by rolling underneath you.

3/4: As soon as your opponent moves the position of their right arm, underhook it to trap them there and grip their collar to control the position.

5: Move around to north south to get a better angle to attack with a choke.

6: Slide your thumb into their lapel to secure a good choking grip.

7/8: Once you've secured choking grips, move back to side control and drop your elbow to the mat to complete the submission.

#battlegearbjj
http://www.facebook.com/battlegi
WWW.BATTLEGEARBJJ.COM
enter JJSBATTLE5 during checkout to get 5% discount
EST. 2012
BATTLE GEAR
LET'S ROLL
BJJ 戰 MMA
enter JJSBATTLE5 during checkout to get 5% discount
International distributors, retailers, clubs, academies & instructors welcome *Please get in touch*
Go to our website for our latest range of BJJ Gi & NoGi equipment and apparel

GARTISTA™
Original Artworks
#design #illustration
#fightwear #lifestyle
#gartistabjj #独創的ga
Proud to support
BJJ 247
独創的GA
GA GARTISTA
ARTWORK BY GARTISTA.COM
GARTISTA.COM

UKBJJA

UK BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU ASSOCIATION

A Big Thank You

Thank you to the sponsors who helped to send the top ranked UKBJJA athletes to the IBJJF Europeans in Lisbon.

Sponsored Athletes

White - Kyra Robinson, Henry Timson. *Blue* - Jane Kotchkina, Ashley Amos. *Purple* - Sean Coates, Kat Hill. *Brown* - Leoni Munslow, Viking Wong. *Black* - Lucio Rodrigues

IDEEPURE.

JIU JITSU STYLE BJJSTYLE.COM

BREAK

OC INDUSTRIES

SAI-KO SAIKO-APPAREL.COM

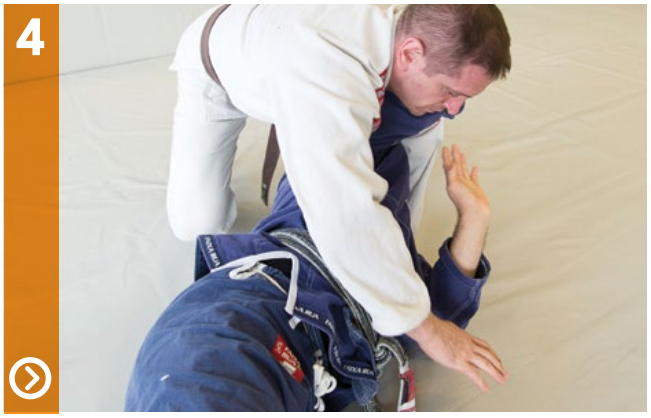
Rainha FIGHTWEAR

SABOROSO AÇAI

SULSTON'S KITCHEN

BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU FAIXA RUA FIGHT OR DIE

1/2/3: Starting from north south, your opponent bridges and passes their right arm under your chin to escape.



4/5: As your opponent turns to their knees, spin towards their back, keep your right arm across their body and slide your left hand into their collar.

6: Slide your thumb into their lapel to secure a good choking grip.

7/8: Shift your weight forwards over your opponent's back and keep turning towards your right to finish the clock choke.

THE "FABULOUS" RASHGUARD

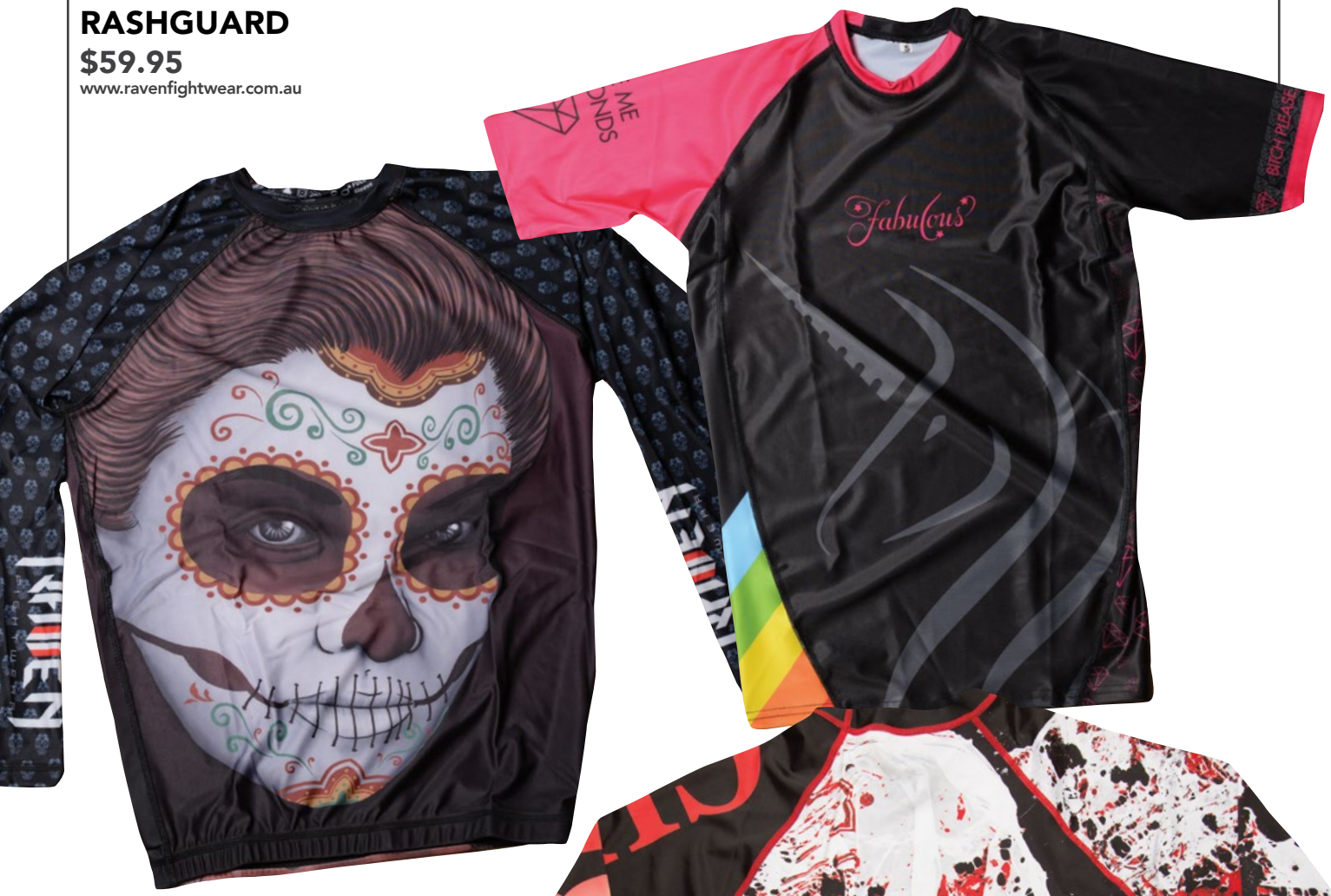
$59.99

www.rollmore.com

RAVEN FIGHTWEAR RASHGUARD

$59.95

www.ravenfightwear.com.au



NEWAZA 'CHOKE' RASHGUARD

£37.99

www.newazaapparel.eu

KIT BAG

93 BRAND X MEERKATSU CHINESE ZODIAC KIMONO
$149.99
www.rollmore.com

'JUST ANOTHER LION TO KILL' RASHGUARD
LIMITED EDITION
www.scramblestuff.com

MIKE LENG

EATING AS YOU AGE & 'CHEAT' MEALS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Welcome to another session where I answer your questions on nutrition!

"The most important thing when choosing food for yourself is to make sure that everything you choose is nutritionally dense and fits with your goals"

We've had some really good ones sent in this time and it was very tough to choose just a couple of people to help! I'm seeing more and more people who are confused by nutrition and how to structure it specifically for grappling. Either all the advice out there seems to be aimed at body builders or everything seems to contradict something else!

As always, if you are looking to get a better understanding of nutrition, then I highly recommend speaking to your coach or a professional about having a plan set up for your individual needs. Consulting your doctor before undertaking any kind of new nutrition plan is also heavily advised.

Many people have a terrible experience when it comes to their nutrition as they simply don't know what they are doing. And it's not their fault; there are so many different schools of thought out there so who isn't going to get confused! Where do you start? Do you fast? Do you carb cycle? Do you have cheats? Do you only eat fruit that has been picked by a female Unicorn under the light of a full moon?

The list of confusing topics is endless.

Not only does it seem that setting up a nutrition plan is problematic, but then adjusting that plan or tailoring it to your own individual needs keeps tripping people up!

So, I'm here to help. Here are a few that really caught my eye this issue.

QUESTION: I'm Anthony, aged 34, 87kg and at least 10kg to lose.

Born French - meaning butter, cheese, milk and all the rest.

Living in Israel - meaning hummus, fried food, and Shabbat dinner and lunch.

Ok, so as an observant Jew I have a hard time maintaining a diet because you know... Shabbat dinner and lunch are like 'mandatory', and adding all our holidays meaning always food food, food!!!

Adding on top a FODMAP like sensitivity...

Nightmare. Any ideas/solutions?

It comes down to one age old question really. How badly do you want it?

Losing 10kg isn't a huge amount but will still require you to have an intelligently set up diet that you consistently stick to so that you achieve the results that you want.

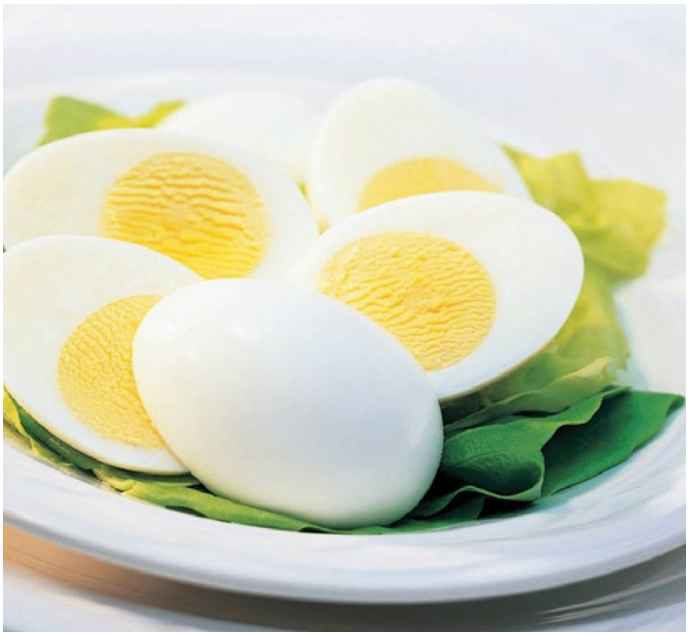
If you were fully committed to losing the 10kg then it would only take you a few months to achieve. When you have reached your goal you can then re-assess and start to add foods back in while maintaining your new weight (if that is what you would like to do).

"AS ALWAYS, YOU NEED TO BE LOOKING AT YOUR NUTRITION PLAN AS A WHOLE. NO ONE FOOD, OR GROUPS OF FOODS, ARE GOING TO MAGICALLY HEAL YOU"

I'm sorry, but I don't buy the reasons that you have given as legitimate reasons why you cannot achieve your goal. You don't cite any specific illnesses or physical factors. Now if what you really mean is that you prioritise those foods over the goal of losing 10kg, then that's absolutely fine. Everything has a price and if you don't want to pay it, then you can't have it. That's the universal rule, not mine.

I'm not trying to be mean, or even give you some 'tough love', I'm just telling you how it is. Sometimes we have to sacrifice something to achieve a goal. Think about all the mat hours you had to put in to get a stripe or a belt. You didn't just get given it by your instructor, you had to earn it. This is no different.

What you need to do is get your diet set up with the right amount of calories and macro nutrients (protein, fat and carbs), find out when you can have free meals and then execute that on a consistent



Unorthodox Nutrition work with athletes worldwide, from local stars right the way through to UFC fighters, premiership footballers and world champions. They specialise in helping combat athletes lose fat and gain muscle so that they can operate to the maximum of their potential during training and competition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.UNORTHODOX-NUTRITION.COM

basis. I know that if you start doing this you will get the results you need to keep going!

QUESTION: What would you say are the important foods I should be eating as I get older to keep me training?

As always, you need to be looking at your nutrition plan as a whole. No one food (or groups of foods) is going to magically heal you. However there are a few things that you can do to help keep you on the mat.

• Drink more water. This is something everyone forgets to do. When you are even slightly dehydrated your body struggles to recover and perform. Aim for 3-4 litres on training days.

• Take fish oil. I seem to go on about this every article but it really does help transform grappler's lives. It will help you reduce inflammation in your body (think fewer aching joints and fingers) and massively help your recovery.

• Eat a bit more fat. People tend to do a bit better on high fat diets as they get older.

Another tip that isn't about nutrition but training related, is to watch the intensity of your training. Going all out in every roll, every session is just a really quick way to get injured or hamper your recovery as you get older. Make sure that you're only having a couple of really hard sessions a week.

QUESTION: I really can't stand eating vegetables like broccoli etc. Are there any suggestions on how to get the nutrients I need without eating plain old broccoli?

No. You're going to die.

Seriously though, veggies are amazing things that help your body get all the right amount of micro nutrients needed for good health, performance and recovery. The best things that you can do are to start taking a multi vitamin, try a greens shake and look at using recipes that add a lot of veggies while masking the taste and texture (a slow cooker is great for this).

QUESTION: I love to eat, so do you have any suggested 'cheat' meals that actually aren't that bad for you?

I know a lot of nutritionists have a real problem with him, but Joe Wicks (The Body Coach) has some great recipes that are jam packed with nutrients. However, as some are quite calorie dense, I would watch how many times you are having them!

Here is a nice trick I use from The Upgraded Grappler Program to make a low carb pizza:

CAULIFLOWER PIZZA CRUST

INGREDIENTS

1 head of cauliflower or a bag of frozen cauliflower
1 egg, preferably the omega-3 enriched variety
1 cup fat-free or reduced-fat mozzarella cheese, shredded
Half cup of grated parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon dried oregano

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees F.

2. Steam your cauliflower until soft. Mash in a bowl with a fork or potato masher. Strain out as much of the water as you can.

3. Combine mashed cauliflower with the egg, parmesan, mozzarella, and oregano. Form into a "dough ball" and again squeeze it dry.

4. Spray a pizza pan with Pam (or non-stick spray) and mash the dough ball down into a round crust.

5. Bake for 12 to 20 minutes until lightly browned.

6. Top with low-sugar pasta sauce, fat-free cheese, and any toppings of choice: turkey, pepperoni, mushrooms, spinach, peppers, low-fat Canadian bacon, etc.

7. Place back in oven until cheese melts and toppings are heated through, then mentally prepare for the mouth-gasm heading your way.

The most important thing to remember when it comes to your cheat meal is to make it scheduled and make sure it fits in with what you're trying to achieve (multiple cheat meals a week won't help you drop a weight class).

These are all great questions that highlight the vastly different ways that people can incorporate their nutritional approach into their lives. Remember that there is no perfect diet. The best plan is the one that fits your lifestyle, that you can do consistently and that gives you results.

If you have any questions then please send them to u2us@bjjstyle.com

Stay healthy,

Mike

FIT TO FIGHT

SINGLE LIMB LIFTS VERSUS DOUBLE LIMB LIFTS

Many sports are alike in that athletes are required to change direction and utilise different body positions to participate efficiently and effectively. Often, an athlete will be required to transfer weight from one limb to another. To successfully exhibit athleticism, it is important that athletes possess strength, balance and coordination - on one or two limbs - to complete sport-specific tasks. Training in a manner that occasionally utilises one limb at a time allows postural control and core stabilisation to come into play. Examples of single limb exercises include:

- SINGLE ARM SNATCHES
- SINGLE ARM JERKS
- SINGLE LEG SQUATS
- LUNGES
- STEP-UPS
- SINGLE ARM ROWS
- SINGLE ARM BENCH PRESSES

My personal recommendation for the savvy grappling athlete would be to make these exercises a staple within your training alongside the basic compound movements. If you are not familiar with single limb work, you will soon find out that you are not as strong as you think you are! Work these exercises into your program alongside their compound lift relations. So for example:

A. SQUAT - 5X5 FRONT FOOT ELEVATED REVERSE LUNGE 4X10 EACH SIDE

B. WEIGHTED CHINS - 5X5 SINGLE ARM ROW 5X10 EACH SIDE

C. SINGLE ARM KETTLEBELL CLEAN & JERK - 6X3 RING PUSH-UP 2X MAX REPS

SINGLE LEG SQUAT

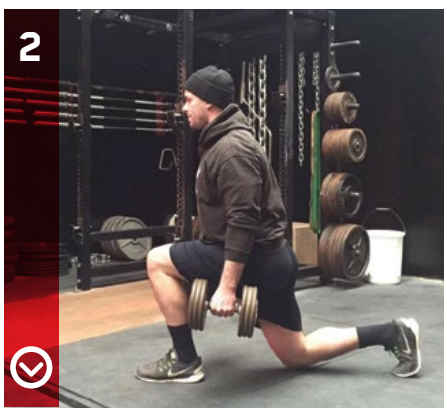
SINGLE ARM JERK

SINGLE ARM SNATCH

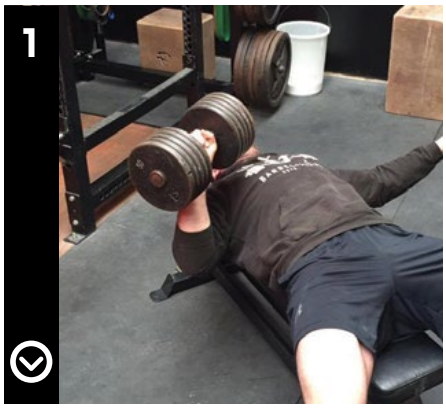
ANDY MARSHALL is the owner of *Villain Strength* and a strength and conditioning expert. He has worked with notable professional athletes including heavyweight boxing contender, Dillian Whyte, and British grappling standout, Dan Strauss.

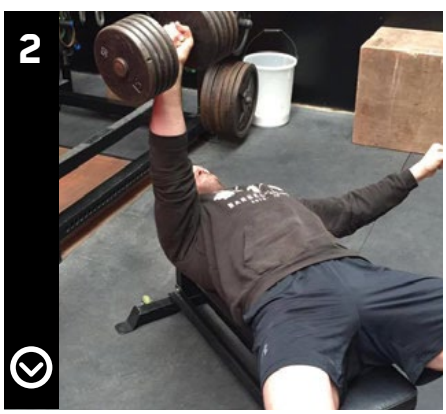
SINGLE ARM ROWS

REVERSE LUNGE

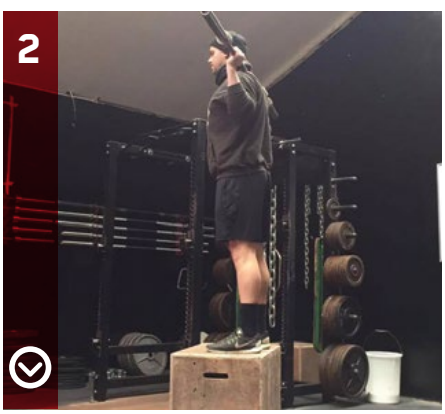


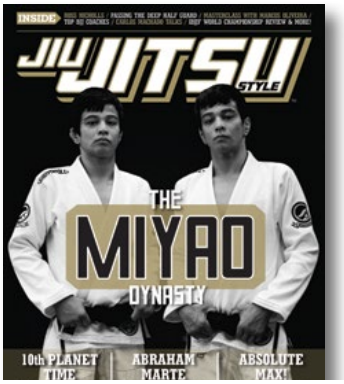
SINGLE ARM PRESS





STEP UP





BJJSTYLE.COM

UK, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE

WORDS: REBECCA HILL

TO WHIP OR NOT TO WHIP?

'Running the gauntlet' is a post-promotion convention common in many Brazilian jiu jitsu academies across the globe.

After graduation to blue, purple or brown belt, the BJJ student makes their way between two lines of team mates who normally whip the student across the back with their belts.

Some teams are big fans of the ritual, some have done away with it while others have alternative traditions such as throwing the newly-promoted practitioner or a series of gruelling rolls with team mates and instructors.

The whipping tradition is sometimes a contentious issue. Some clubs value the ritual as a method of team bonding while others have dropped the gauntlet through fear of legal repercussions, concerns about the message it gives to junior participants and an awareness of potential negative social effects.

To fully understand the benefits and the downsides of the behaviour, it helps to examine the question of whipping from a psychological perspective, and specifically through the lens of group dynamics. What inter-personal function does the gauntlet serve? And what are the potential downsides of such a ritual?

In his research, renowned sport psychologist Bert Carron identified distinctiveness from other groups as an important part of team cohesion. Group rituals can be used as a way to create this distinctiveness. Running the gauntlet might hurt but you and each one of your team mates will go through it at some point. Especially for the transition from white to blue belt, the whipping is the price of acceptance into the 'new belt club'. This badge of honour signifies that you are now part of the 'in-group', which creates a sense of belonging.

In psychological terms, whipping is a group norm – a standard or expectation for group members' behaviour. As Carron and his colleagues found, groups are more cohesive and more effective when they have a set of behaviours which are normal for the group. For advocates of the tradition, running the gauntlet is just a normal part of doing BJJ and the associated pain is just another facet of the jiu jitsu experience.

Although it is often described as a tradition, the practice is perhaps not as old as we might think. An article on the subject from bjjheroes.com suggests that the rite of passage was first introduced by Rigan Machado black belt Chris Haueter during the 1990s after his experiences in military training. Haueter himself described the gauntlet as a hazing ritual (or initiation, for the Brits among us).

There may not be any formal research about the effects of the whipping or other physical rituals in BJJ. But there are studies on the consequences of hazing in US college and high school sports, and on initiation ceremonies in British-based sports. These reports provide another perspective on hazing activities such as running the gauntlet. Overall, these reports suggest that the negative consequences might outweigh the benefit of team cohesion.

Often the physical effects of running the gauntlet fade quickly but the social and psychological aspects can have a longer-lasting impact. There is always the risk that people take the whipping too far. Indeed, it is the blurry line between hazing and bullying that has prompted many educational institutions on both sides of the Atlantic to ban initiation ceremonies. Some hazing incidents have been so extreme that they have ended up going to court. While whipping is arguably tamer, off the mats it would be deemed wholly inappropriate to inflict such bodily harm. Somehow the jiu jitsu context makes it acceptable (in some people's eyes at least).

Some instructors argue that a newly-graded student has a choice about whether they are on the receiving end of the gauntlet, and that the student would still be promoted even if they chose not to join in. However, social pressure can make it hard to opt out – even if you would not normally choose to be part of the hazing ritual. And there are social costs to deviating from the norm. In some circles, you risk being perceived as 'weak' and falling out of favour with the in-group, which in turn could negatively affect your progress in jiu jitsu.

Those who want the pride associated with surviving the gauntlet willingly choose to engage in it. Others, however, may feel more coerced into participation to maintain social harmony. This may lead to the student experiencing a lack of autonomy. The sense that we freely choose our own actions is important for motivation. We need to be aware that pressuring someone to join in the gauntlet (however subtle the pressure) might have an unwanted side effect of lowering a student's motivation for BJJ.

Furthermore, as students of jiu jitsu we trust our instructors to have our physical and mental well-being as a priority. Creating a situation that opens the door for potential harm – perceived or otherwise – may well undermine this trust.

From a psychosocial viewpoint, there are some benefits to the whipping ritual in terms of team bonding. But on balance these are perhaps outweighed by the unintended downsides. Being promoted to a new belt is a time for celebration rather than punishment. Maybe it's time for us to develop healthier traditions to honour a student's graduation?

Dr Rebecca Hill is a Psychologist chartered by the British Psychological Society with a PhD in Sport and Exercise Psychology. She is also a BJJ black belt competitor under Professor Victor Estima and a current European Champion. She blogs about sport psychology and BJJ at rebeccalhill.com.

MEERKATSU ARTWORKS
PRESENTS

ORCHID DRAGON

BJJ KIMONO

楊蜀望
MEERKATSU

AVAILABLE NOW AT
WWW.MEERKATSU.COM

WORDS: HANNAH GORMAN

BALANCED TRAINING: GI & NOGI

Out of the five classes I take each week, one of them is nogi. The 'Sub only Sunday' session is gi or nogi, personal preference, so I often rock up in my spats in the hope of finding a friend who wants to shed the pyjamas for some leg lock battles.

I used to train solely in the gi. Like most newbies starting out I attended two or three gi sessions a week for a few months, blissfully unaware of the nogi class on offer. When I eventually got round to trying out the class (a year or so into training) I discovered something that most people do - I sucked.

Now, I'm not saying I was awesome at jiu jitsu by any means, but after one year of training three times a week I was starting to feel competent at what I was doing. Removing the gi changed that and I felt like I was re-learning everything all over again. Using alternative grips, not being able to stall for a moment to think, people attacking my legs; it was hell!

Luckily for me I'm stubborn and not easily defeated, so I stuck at it. Transitioning into nogi is a quick but steep learning curve, so it doesn't take long to become as competent as you are in the gi. But so many people don't stick at it long enough. Maybe this is why nogi classes are not as popular. My coach tried to combat this by moving the nogi class to a timeslot directly after the gi class, but people still leave after the first session. It's baffling. Grappling is grappling for some, but obviously not for all! So, as you can probably gather, my personal opinion lies with maintaining a balance between the two. Through doing this, I reap the benefits each individual style has to offer.

If my cardio needs work, or if I keep getting stuck in side control, I'll opt for nogi on a Sunday session so I can work on speed, transitions and escapes - all with less friction slowing me down. I've developed a new-found love of leglocks, and I have a much better success rate of pulling them off without the gi being used against me. Nogi sessions (often referred to as 'submission grappling' sessions) usually come with the added bonus of not following the IBJJF rule set, which opens up more nasty leglock attacks.

Some days I'll want to work on certain concepts like manipulating base and balance or to drill some kind of lapel guard sweep, in which case I'll wear the gi, as I'll more than likely require grips. I wouldn't like to commit to one over the other. I can do things in nogi that I'd struggle to pull off in the gi, and vice versa. But what do most people do?

Many of the large UK schools share a clear bias towards training in the gi, with most clubs offering only a single nogi session per week. But across the pond, things look a little different. Marcelo Garcia's academy now offers gi and nogi classes every day. The same can be said for Roberto Abreu's gym, Fight Sports, where they offer a nogi class almost every day. The schedules for both of these schools still include more gi classes than nogi, but there are suitable nogi alternatives at much regular intervals than at other schools.

Perhaps this has to do with their influence and interest in competitions such as the ADCC championships. The schedules of the instructors who compete regularly at events such as ADCC (the likes of Cyborg, the Mendes Bros, Galvao) all seem to provide a greater number of nogi classes than those who don't. Some of the most popular grapplers at the moment include Eddie Cummings and Garry Tonon, who almost exclusively train nogi. They also exclusively compete nogi, whether that be through Polaris Pro or the EBI events.

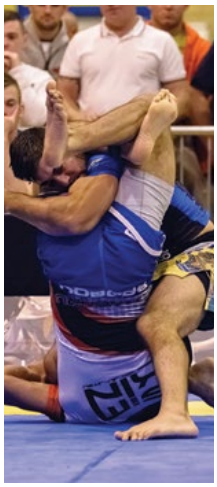
Aside from the 10th Planet guys, these two are part of a small minority of people who have committed to one style of grappling. However, they are both proving to be incredibly successful competitors in their niche of sub only competition. Despite the IBJJF offering nogi versions of almost all their gi events, we don't see these two compete regularly at IBJJF events. Both Tonon and Cummings use a lot of heel hooks, so their competition strategies probably wouldn't transfer well into the IBJJF rule set. But what about guys that train solely in the gi?

Roberto 'Gordo' Correa's gym, based in Rio De Janeiro, does not schedule any nogi classes at all unless a large nogi event is coming up, in which case I've been told that they decide to train nogi in certain sessions. Would it be a fair assumption to say that the most successful fighters train both gi and nogi? The likes of Cyborg, Galvao, Mendes, Cobrinha and Nicolini are all champions at ADCC (nogi), as well as all being IBJJF world champions in the gi. Can the same be said for the guys that train solely with or without the gi?

The 10th Planet team did not make the top 10 in the team rankings for the 2015 IBJJF Nogi Worlds, but I have no figures for how many individuals entered. This could suggest that they do not have a huge presence at these events for whatever reason (perhaps their style of grappling does not suit the IBJJF rule set) or that they simply don't perform as well as members from teams such as Atos or Alliance (who ranked 1st and 2nd respectively in the 2015 nogi rankings). Both of these teams actively promote training in both the gi and nogi, with an almost 50/50 split training schedule between the two. These teams are topping the rankings in the biggest IBJJF events every year. Could this be attributed to them not specialising in one form of grappling over another? Are they developing a more rounded grappling game by providing their members with an equal mix of the two styles?

Regardless of the ratios, training both in and out of the gi seems to be the best formula for most of the current BJJ champions. Many schools train to the IBJJF ruleset (no knee reaping etc.) and so these schools, regardless of whether they train with or without the gi, are going to be better prepared for the IBJJF style events. As the rise of sub only competitions continue, it would be very interesting to see some pairings between the likes of Garry Tonon and Eddie Cummings with current IBJJF world champions like Andre Galvao or Rafael Mendes to test the purely nogi guys against the guys who train both equally.

How do you split your training routine? Do you train nogi and gi equally? Let us know your thoughts on this subject via u2us@bjjstyle.com



To follow Hannah's more regular updates check out shebeastbjj.com

ROGER GRACIE
BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

ROGER GRACIE

10 X BLACK BELT WORLD CHAMPION

THE BEST BJJ SCHOOL IN LONDON

COME JOIN OUR FAMILY

CALL US FOR A

FREE CLASS

0203 220 0095

More informations:
www.rogergracie.com
academy@rogergracie.com

rogergracie
@rogergracie

DO YOU WANT YOUR PRODUCTS REVIEWED?

To have your jiu jitsu gear featured in JJS, send us an email at info@bjjstyle.com

REVIEW CORNER

AESTHETIC 'THE OMBRE' KIMONO

£99 VIA WWW.FIGHTAESTHETIC.COM

As the name suggests, Aesthetic are well known for making eye catching jiu jitsu apparel – and we are big fans. Their latest kimono, the 'Ombre', has to be one of the most unique products we've ever got out hands on. The pure black jacket and trousers are beautifully offset with orange and red colouring that really does jump out at you like nothing we've ever seen on a BJJ mat.

The most innovative aspect of this product is the gradient lapel, which starts as orange around the neck and gradually changes to red as you reach the skirt of the jacket. This must have taken some significant planning, and countless samples from the factory, but it was so worth it! The two-tone Aesthetic logo also sits across both shoulders, and the base of the skirt vents are trimmed with gold. One of the most awesome things about this kimono is that you get two sets of trousers! The cotton drill and ripstop pants feature the Aesthetic logo on the lower right leg in gold, and coloured belt loops to secure the drawstring around the waist.

Like all Aesthetic kimonos, the jacket and trousers have a very modern cut, with no excess baggy material in unwanted areas. Coming in at 350gsm, this is a nice, lightweight kimono, which feels comfy while remaining sturdy. The product does come pre shrunk, so you can expect minimal shrinkage and we'd suggest that you order your regular size when making a purchase.

The Ombre is a sure fire hit with those of you looking for a bit of attention on the mat, but this is no gimmick product. Aesthetic have gone to great lengths to make this a premium offering in terms of durability as well as design. Coming in at £99, it's also at a great price point for such high-end kimono.

TATAMI FIGHTWEAR LUGGAGE BAG

£60 VIA WWW.TATAMIFIGHTWEAR.COM

If you're regularly on the road, at the airport or generally travelling for jiu jitsu seminars and competitions, Tatami Fightwear's latest luggage bag is right up your street. This bag is the ideal size for weekend stopovers, with plenty of room for multiple gis and training gear. The best part is, it even qualifies as hand luggage on aeroplanes!

The main section consists of a 30L interior pocket that can accommodate two kimonos. There is also front wet pocket, big enough to store multiple used rashguards after training and keep them away from the main compartment. There is a further front pocket and two side compartments to store your passport, water bottle and general bits and pieces when you're on the road.

The main benefits of this bag is that it includes both wheels and an extendable handle, as well as hidden back back straps via a zip up section at the back. This hybrid approach is very handy, as you can seamlessly switch between wheeling through the airport if your bag is full, or simply drop the handle, unzip the straps and use it as a regular backpack.

For us, this luggage bag was the ideal accompaniment when heading to competitions; it was easy to store a kimono, towel, tape and water bottle without having to carry a huge training pack around all day. There was also plenty of room left over for celebratory purchases at the tournament trade stands!

Tatami Fightwear are a company that know grapplers inside out, so it's no surprise that they've come up with yet another hit product that will resonate with keen jiu jitsu players.

SHROOM TECH SPORT BY ONNIT

$59.88 VIA WWW.ONNIT.COM

Pre workout supplements can be a real minefield to navigate, since you run the risk of picking up some horrible concoction of unnatural stimulants that leave you jittering by the side of the mat with your heart racing. Shroom Tech Sport is, without doubt, the best pre workout supplement we've tested, and the best part is that it's created from a whole lot of natural ingredients.

Advertised as helping to increase 'advanced ATP energy', one of the key ingredients in Shroom Tech is the Cordyceps sinensis mushroom. This mushroom has been tested in multiple clinical studies, some of which demonstrated endurance, resistance to fatigue and improvement in oxygen utilisation by as much as 50%. It is believed that one way the Cordyceps mushroom achieves this is by affecting the ARP cycle. By providing raw adenosine, ADP is converted to ATP more readily, allowing the body more bioavailable cellular energy.

The beauty of Shroom Tech is that it looks to battle fatigue and optimise performance by providing cellular energy through the production of ATP rather than purely stimulant based energy. So what does this mean? Well, you don't have to worry about heart palpitations or getting the jitters on Shroom Tech, which is a common side effect of some stimulant-based pre workout supplements on the market.

After a solid month of testing alongside a consistent diet, we found Shroom Tech to offer great results. There was no instant 'kick' right before a session like you can get from other stimulants, instead we experienced a nice, level feeling of heightened energy levels in the build up to and during training. There was no crashing after a session like you can get from stimulants, and in a strange way Shroom Tech just made training feel 'better'. Optimum performance was achieved on the recommended dosage of three pills about 45 minutes before a session, so you don't have to worry about upping the dosage to feel the benefits. We were truly surprised by the positive results we achieved from Shroom Tech and would highly recommend you giving it a try ahead of any stimulant-based supplement. If you still feel you need a more tangible 'power up' before training, we'd recommended a strong coffee, but it seems horrible stimulant supplements could be a thing of the past.

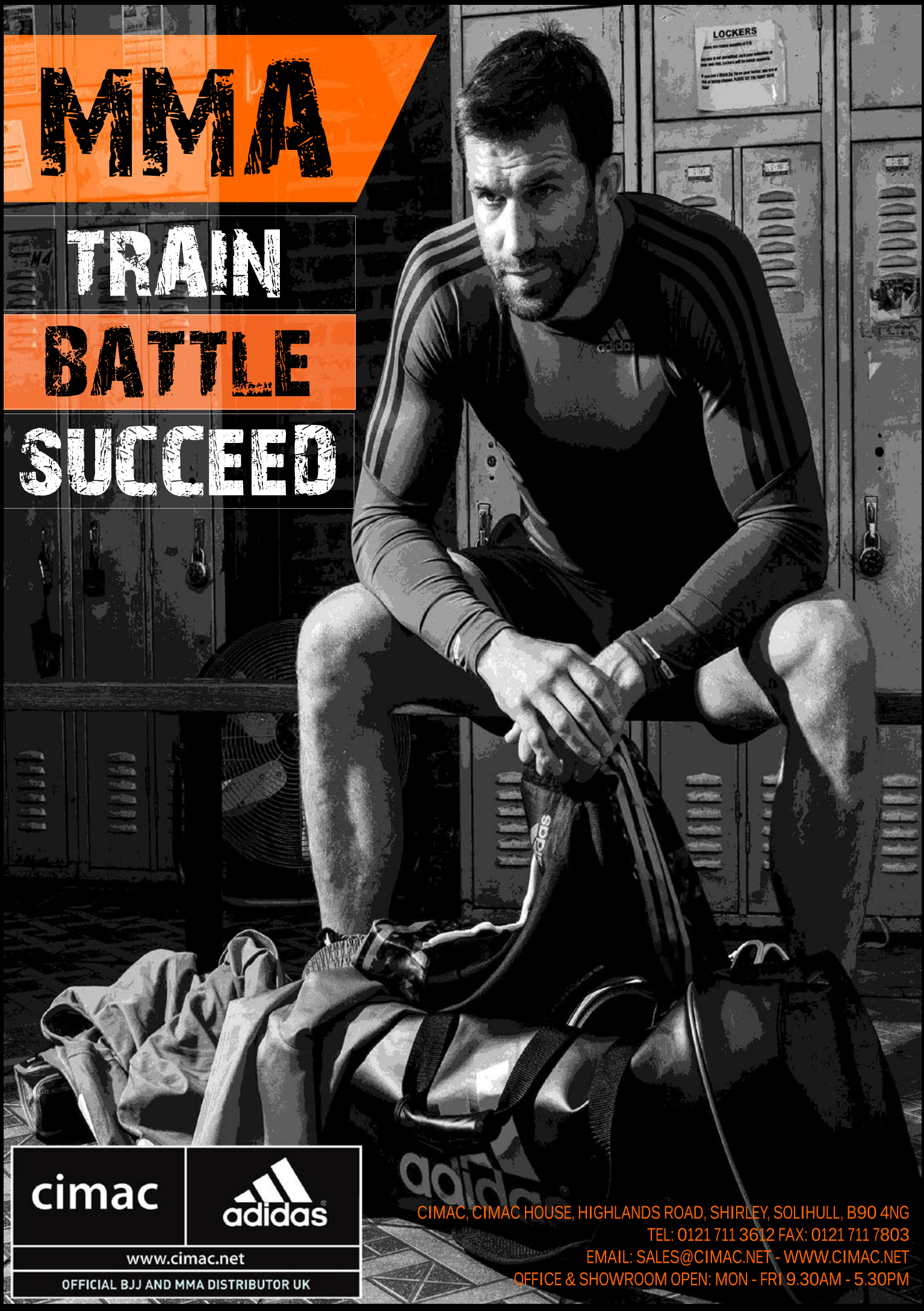
THE UPGRADED GRAPPLER PROGRAMME

£19.99 VIA WWW.UPGRADEDGRAPPLER.COM

The problem with most grappler programmes is that they are either not designed for sport (think lots of bicep curls or workouts from muscle magazines) or they are pure strength programmes designed for 'lifters' that just lift and do nothing else. What happens with both of these programmes is that there is either no carry over to grappling, or people get burned out really quickly and then have to dial back on training. What you will learn to do with the Upgraded Grappler system is to supplement your jiu jitsu with training and nutrition that will take you to the world class level.

The system is designed to compliment your training to make you a better athlete. The programme will help make you stronger, faster, more powerful and recover faster while making you healthier, since who wants to fall apart in just a few years?

The system is split into two parts: strength/conditioning and nutrition. The strength/conditioning will give you specific exercises to do, at a specific weight, in a specific order, while the nutrition will give you exactly what macro nutrients to eat and guidelines to maximise them. It is the combination of these two parts that will give you the best results. Both of these factors can be repeated continually, as the professionally designed spread sheets will adjust everything as you go. The beauty of the Upgraded Grappler programme is that it's a completely intuitive system that adjusts itself based directly on your results. Considering access to the programme only costs £19.99, this is a truly fantastic resource for grapplers looking to gain solid advice on strength training and nutrition, as well as being a great tool to keep track of progress and make alterations.


MMA
TRAIN
BATTLE
SUCCEED
LOCKERS
adidas
cimac
adidas
www.cimac.net
OFFICIAL BJJ AND MMA DISTRIBUTOR UK
CIMAC, CIMAC HOUSE, HIGHLANDS ROAD, SHIRLEY, SOLIHULL, B90 4NG
TEL: 0121 711 3612 FAX: 0121 711 7803
EMAIL: SALES@CIMAC.NET - WWW.CIMAC.NET
OFFICE & SHOWROOM OPEN: MON - FRI 9.30AM - 5.30PM

RAY STEVENS ACADEMY

Olympic Judo Silver Medalist • Roger Gracie Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Black Belt

WWW.RAYSTEVENSACADEMY.CO.UK

ENQUIRIES@RAYSTEVENSACADEMY.CO.UK

07753606172 / 07956676452

CLASSES - MONDAY/WEDNESDAY/FRIDAY/SATURDAY

GI SPOTLIGHT | PUNCHSTRONG 'LOVE LIFE' KIMONO

OVERVIEW

PunchStrong's 'Love life' kimono is an extremely well made product and fun to train in. The branding and placements are unique, the cut is comfy and it comes in at an excellent price point of £75. Considering this is the first kimono in the PunchStrong catalogue, they've really outdone themselves.

JACKET

The jacket is made from 450 gsm pearl weave cotton, which offers a nice compromise between durability and still keeping it lightweight. Love it or hate it (and we definitely love it) the PunchStrong logo is as bold as it gets, consisting of a bright pink fist that houses the company name. The pink logo is very striking on the black kimono, and is situated on both upper arms, the lower left section of the jacket front and across the back. The slogan, 'It's a way of living' runs down the left lapel, and the whole jacket also features white contrast stitching. There was negligible shrinkage after multiple washes and the fit remained pretty much perfect. The only other flashes of colour come via the blue detailing on the sleeve cuffs and jacket skirt lining, which includes another cool slogan, 'A rolling stone gathers no moss'.

TROUSERS

The trousers are made from ripstop cotton, and are fastened by a rope drawstring in the conventional way. One of our favourite design features of this whole product is the prominent PunchStrong logo placement on the left butt cheek. It's a pretty unique logo placement and it definitely adds a little flair to what can often be the most boring part of a kimono. The lower section of the right leg also includes a unique double fist motif, which includes the wording, 'Love Life' – another really nice touch.

DETAILS

One of the standout details of this kimono has to be its colour scheme. We love the use of vibrant pink and deep blue on black, and it's definitely one of the most distinctive gis we've tested in recent times. It is worth noting that the kimono is also available in blue, which still features pink and blue offset branding.

SUMMARY

In all honesty, we weren't too sure what to expect before receiving our review sample of this product, but it turned out to be such a fun gi to train in. The whole 'Love Life' concept is really positive and – in our opinion – reflects very well on the brand as a whole. All in all, this is a cracking gi that you can pick up for a great price and are sure to enjoy training in.

AVAILABLE VIA

PUNCHSTRONG.COM FOR £74.99

PICTURES: CALLUM MEDCRAFT

IBJJF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

2016 represented a year of change for the IBJJF European Championships, as we saw the prestigious event moving to a new venue, with another record-breaking competitor list.

A reported 3,400 athletes made their way to Lisbon for what was another action-packed five days of jiu jitsu.

In many ways it was a year for the newcomers in the adult black belt divisions. The lightweight division saw Atos' Michael Liera Jr rise to the top to pick up his first major title, while the increasingly impressive Erberth Santos defeated none other than Lucio 'Lagarto' in the -94kg final. However, it was the middleweight division and the dominance of Yago de Souza that provided the most standout performances of all. Souza breezed past Alan 'Finfou' Nascimento in the division final after a number of notable victories in his preliminary bouts.

As expected Mackenzie Dern was on top form in the female black belt brackets, making short work of all-comers in the openweight division. However, it was Alliance's Andresa Correa that stopped Dern in her tracks in the final, picking up double gold honours having already won the middle heavy division.

Alhough there were a number of notable late omissions from the European Championships this year (namely Andre Galvao and Leandro Lo) there was still plenty of top talent on display. With the likes of Erberth Santos, Yago de Souza and Felipe Pena making big statements with their electrifying jiu jitsu, we may well have witnessed the winds of change as the new generation begin their reign.

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / ROOSTER

First - *Caio Terra - Brasa CTA*
Second - *Koji Shibamoto - Tri-Force Jiu-Jitsu*
Third - *Vincent Nguyen - Atos Jiu-Jitsu*
Third - *Rodnei Barbosa Gabriel Junior - Zenith BJJ*

Far right:
Caio Terra vs
Koji Shibamoto.
Below: Joao Miyao
vs Hiago George.

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / LIGHT FEATHER

First - *Joao Miyao - PSLPB Cicero Costha*
Second - *Hiago George - PSLPB Cicero Costha*
Third - *Luis Felipe Ninja - Leonardo Peçanha*
Third - *Gabriel Willcox Furley - Icon Jiu-Jitsu Team*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / FEATHER

First - *Marcio Andre - Nova Uniao*
Second - *Paulo Miyao - PSLPB Cicero Costha*
Third - *Brian Mahecha - American Top Team*
Third - *Ítalo Silva Lins de Albuquerque - GF Team*

Left:
Marcio Andre.
Below:
Michael Liera Jr.
vs Alex Cabanes
Gisbert.
Bottom right:
Yago de Sousa vs
Alan do Nascimento

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / LIGHT

First - *Michael Liera Jr. - Atos Jiu-Jitsu*
Second - *Alex Cabanes Gisbert - Atos Jiu-Jitsu*
Third- *Sam Gibson - Carlson Gracie Team*
Third - *Edwin Najmi - Gracie Barra*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / MIDDLE

First - *Yago de Souza - NS Brotherhood*
Second - *Alan do Nascimento - Checkmat*
Third - *Charles Negromonte - Gracie Barra*
Third - *Eduardo Rios - Frontline Academy*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / MIDDLE HEAVY

First - *Gabriel Arges - Gracie Barra JJ*
Second - *Romulo Barral - Gracie Barra*
Third - *Patrick Gaudio - GF Team*
Third - *Diogo Sampaio Araujo - Soul Fighters BJJ*

Far left:
Gabriel Arges vs
Romulo Barral.
Below:
Jackson Sousa vs
Felipe Menezes
Bueno

Below right:
Erbeth Santos vs
Lucio Rodrigues

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / HEAVY

First - *Jackson Sousa - Checkmat*
Second *- Felipe Menezes Bueno - Alliance*
Third *- Manuel Pontes - Gracie Barra BJJ*
Third *- Maksymilian Wisniewski - Zenith BJJ*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / SUPER HEAVY

First - *Erberth Santos - Ryan Gracie Team*
Second - *Lucio Rodrigues - Gracie Barra*
Third - *Alexandro de Souza - Ceconi Team*
Third - *Christopher Bowe - Gracie Barra JJ*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / ULTRA HEAVY

First - *Pedro Henrique de Souza - Ribeiro Jiu-Jitsu*
Second - *Luke Costello - Gracie Barra*
Third - *Gilmar Silva de Oliveira - Academia BSB*
Third - *Robson Barbosa Oliveira - Checkmat*

BLACK / ADULT / MALE / OPEN CLASS

First - *Felipe Pena - Gracie Barra*
Second - *Romulo Barral - Gracie Barra*
Third - *Jackson Sousa - Checkmat*
Third - *Erberth Santos - Ryan Gracie Team*

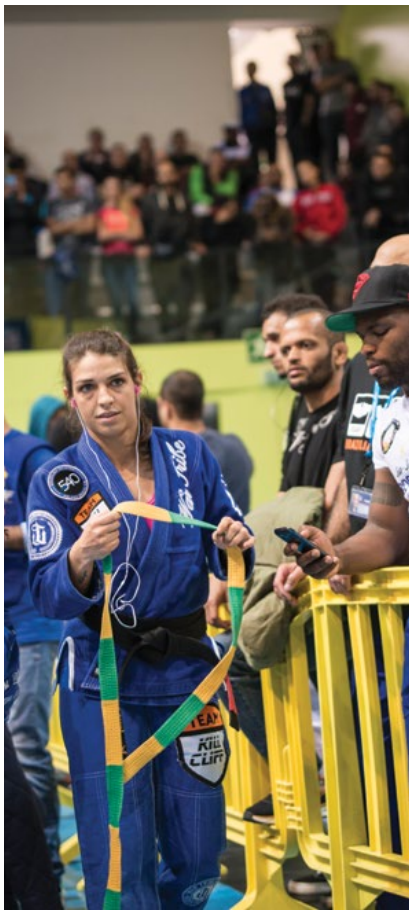
Top Right: Pedro Henrique de Souza vs Luke Costello. Left: Felipe Pena vs Romulo Barral. Far left: Felipe Pena vs Erberth Santos. Below: Kristina Sofia Puruganan Barlaan.

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / LIGHT FEATHER

First - *Kristina Sofia Puruganan Barlaan - Brasa CTA*
Second - *Ariadne de Oliveira - Mestre Wilson BJJ*
Third - *Serena Gabrielli - Flow*
Third - *Chelsea Bainbridge-Donner - Atos Jiu-Jitsu*

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / FEATHER

First - *Mackenzie Dern - Gracie Humaita*
Second *- Yasmine Wilson - Roger Gracie*



Far Right: Mackenzie Dern vs Yas Wilson. Below: Jessica Cristina C. A. dos Santos vs Laurence Cousin Fouillat

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / LIGHT

First - *Jessica Cristina C. A. dos Santos - UAEJJ*
Second - *Laurence Cousin Fouillat - Ribeiro Jiu-Jitsu*
Third - *Maria Dolores Asensi - Climent Club*
Third - *Sarah Johnel Black - GD Jiu-Jitsu Association*

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / MIDDLE

First - *Luiza Monteiro - NS Brotherhood*
Second - *Amanda Loewen - SBG International (SBGI)*
Third - *Shanti Abelha - Checkmat*
Third - *Priscila Cardoso Cerqueira - UAE JJ*

Above: Luiza Monteiro vs Gretchen Zoeller. Left: Luiza Montero vs Amanda Loewer

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / MEDIUM HEAVY

First - *Andresa Correa – Alliance*
Second - *Karolina Zawodnik - Brasa CTA*
Third - *Olga Lyashevska - Carlson Gracie Team*
Third - *Gretchen Dawn Zoeller - Gracie Barra*

BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / SUPER HEAVY

First - *Ewelyn Arruda - Alliance*
Second - *Venla Luukkonen - Hilti BJJ Jyvaskyla*

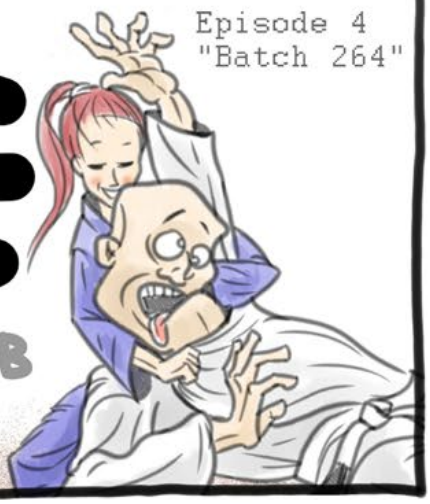
BLACK / ADULT / FEMALE / OPEN CLASS

First - *Andresa Correa - Alliance*
Second - *Mackenzie Lynne Dern - Gracie Humaita*
Third - *Olga Lyashevska - Carlson Gracie Team*
Third - *Luiza Monteiro - NS Brotherhood*

Above and below: Andresa Correa vs Mackenzie Dern. Left middle: Ewelyn Arruda vs Venla Luukonen

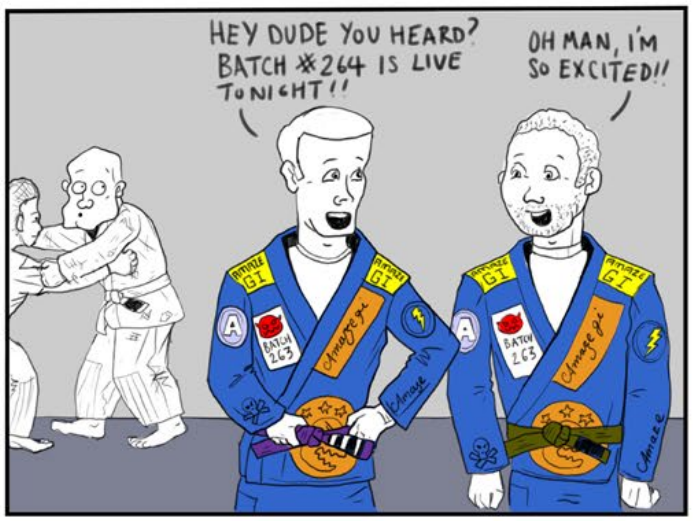
MAT LIFE

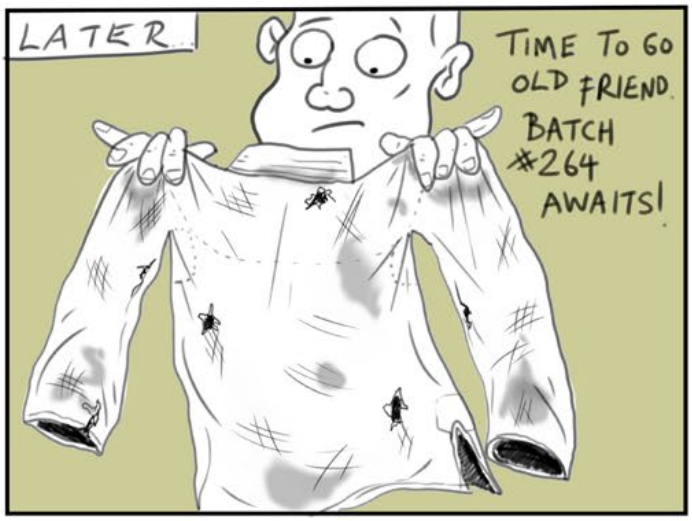
Episode 4
"Batch 264"

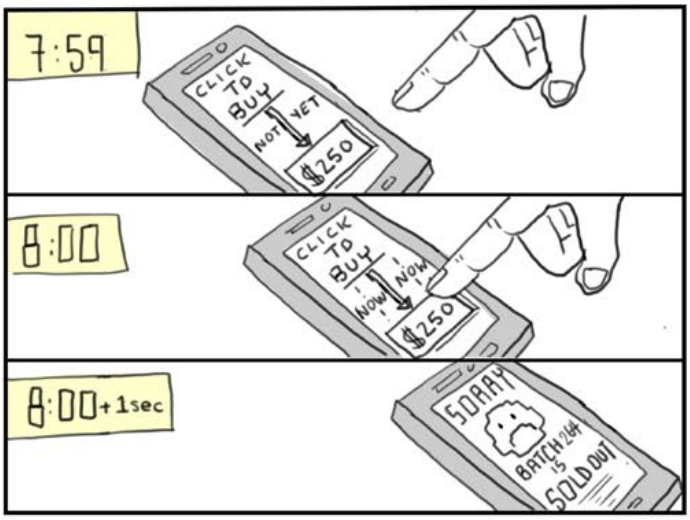


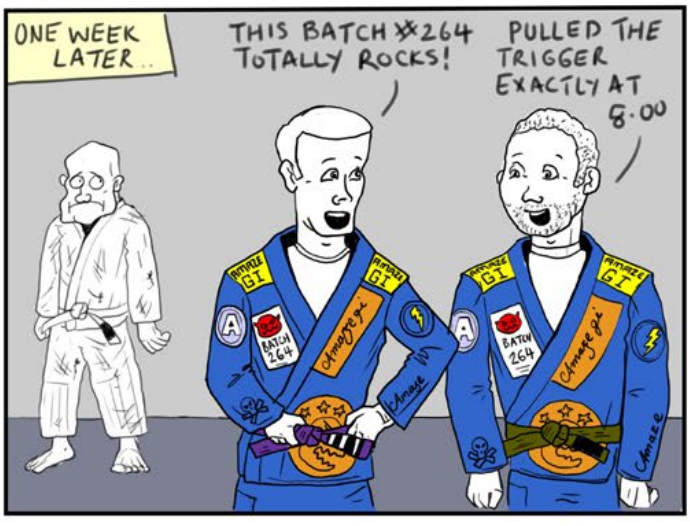
THE ADVENTURES OF A BJJ NOOB

By Meerkatsu









Shoyoroll Design The Future Era

CLASSIC 2.0 - MADE IN CALIFORNIA

Tatami fightwear

estilo5.0